

АВТОР
БЕСТСЕЛЛЕРОВ
«ЛЕДОКОЛ» И
«АКВАРИУМ»

ВИКТОР СУВОРОВ ВЫБОР

КОГДА ДРУЗЬЯ СТАНУТ ЕЕ ВРАГАМИ,
А ВРАГИ – ДРУЗЬЯМИ,
НА ЧЬЮ СТОРОНУ ОНА ВСТАНЕТ?

новое издание,
дополненное
и переработанное

★★★★★

продолжение повести
«Змея» и романа
«Контроль»

VICTOR
SUVOROV

CHOICE

The action-packed historical novel by Viktor Suvorov "The Choice" completes the trilogy about the struggle for power, intrigues and conspiracies within the leadership of the USSR and about the preparation by Stalin of a new world war in 1936-1940, the beginning of which was the story "Snake Eater" and the novel "Control". We become witnesses of the culminating events in the life of the main characters of the trilogy - Anastasia Streletskaya (Firebirds) and Alexander Holovanov (Dragon). Fate guides each of them through severe trials and confronts them with a difficult choice, on which not only their lives depend, but also the future of the country and the world. The author carefully recreates the events and atmosphere of 1939, when Stalin, having seized power in the country and completely subjugated the party and economic apparatus, army and special services, is eager for world domination and starts preparing the World Revolution and a new world war in order to conquer Europe under the guise of communist ideology.

The prototypes of the main characters of the novel were real historical figures who worked hand in hand. hand with Stalin, who supported him in the struggle for power, organized and carried out covert operations in Europe on the eve of World War II.

A special application contains unique archival photographs of the 1930s, telling about the characters of the story and the prototypes of its main characters.

Table of contents

PROLOGUE.....	4
CHAPTER 1.....	5
CHAPTER 2.....	
.10 CHAPTER 3.....	16
CHAPTER 4.....	23
CHAPTER 5.....	thirty
CHAPTER 6.....	38
CHAPTER 7.....	48
CHAPTER 8.....	56
CHAPTER 9.....	62
CHAPTER 10.....	69
CHAPTER 11.....	76
CHAPTER 12.....	82
CHAPTER 13.....	87
CHAPTER 14.....	91
CHAPTER 15.....	98
CHAPTER 16.....	102
CHAPTER 17.....	108
CHAPTER 18	
.113 CHAPTER 19.....	118
CHAPTER 20.....	123
CHAPTER 21.....	127
CHAPTER 22.....	135
CHAPTER 23.....	140
CHAPTER 24	145
CHAPTER 25.....	148
CHAPTER 26.....	154
CHAPTER 27.....	163
CHAPTER 28.....	169
CHAPTER 29.....	179
CHAPTER 30.....	188
CHAPTER 31.	194
CHAPTER 32.....	204
CHAPTER 33.....	208
CHAPTER 34.....	220
CHAPTER 35.....	226
CHAPTER 36.....	233
CHAPTER 37.....	240
CHAPTER 38.....	245
CHAPTER 39.....	251
EPILOGUE.....	258
Viktor Suvorov about his books and about himself.....	266

PROLOGUE

I don't give a minute to think. I demand an instant answer without reflection: the question is right there answer.

- Fine.

- Not even instant - I demand that you answer my question without listening to it until end.

- Clear.

- The question will not be quite ordinary, but I need to hear the answer before I can question in full.

- Understand.

— I need the first spiritual impulse.

- Fine.

Are you ready to answer?

- Ready.

“So, you would like to become the queen of Ispa...?”

Yes, Comrade Stalin.

CHAPTER 1

1

He no longer bypasses puddles. No need. The wind had blown his hat long ago, and the rain had soaked him to the last button, to the last stud in the shoes. Soaked through the raincoat and jacket. soaked so that a handkerchief is in your pocket - and that one must be squeezed out. The rain is pouring, and it goes through the wind and water. It goes all night, all day and night again. He got wet not only from top to bottom from the top of his head to waist and below, but also from the bottom up - from the soles to the waist and above. Go around puddles, do not go around - without difference. He goes from darkness to darkness. He walks, ruffled, his head in the collar.

Pulled up the collar. Soaked in water. From the collar to the bosom - thin streams. If the neck to press the collar, it does not turn out so cold. Here he presses his neck to the collar, warming and her, and the collar.

It seemed to the wind that only one hat was not enough, therefore it also strives to carry away the cloak. torments wind from all four directions at once. Alien wind. Scandinavian. With the smell of snow. Because Cold. Because the teeth knocked, knocked, and stopped: the cheekbones cramped, they don't knock anymore teeth.

The rain is also not local, not Berlin. Long overripe drops with crystals inside. Drops - not like "boom-boom", but like "boom-boom". They blurt out on the black windows of houses. And falling under legs - drops rustle, crunch.

And only after soaking the boot and warming up slightly, those drops into ordinary water they turn and champ in their boots, as in worn-out pumps: chwak-chwak. Heavy, swollen trouser legs stuck to the legs. Water from the pants in streams - some in the boot, some past. And from the darkness him - terrible eyes: "Rudolf Messer is a sorcerer."

And from the other wall, from the darkness, the same eyes look at the wet man: "Rudolf Messer - sorcerer." And from the third. From all the walls of Berlin, sorcerer's eyes bore into the darkness. Posters on three floors. Rain on those posters gushing. The wind tears water streams from the roofs, crushes them and into the eyes of the sorcerer throws, but only eyes attracting in the dim light of a lantern look through the water, penetrating her.

The wet man stopped in the darkness - jets on his face, as if on a poster. Looked down at my feet then he made up his mind and looked into the sorcerer's eyes.

Wow, what.

2

— Comrade Holovanov, what do you know about a man named Rudolf Messer?

- Comrade Stalin, this is a world famous illusionist and hypnotist.

I know this, and everyone knows it except me. I don't want to hear from you what he knows every. Your job is to tell me what no one knows, what even I don't know.

- I have such information.

- And who is he by nationality, this very Rudolf Messer?

- He traveled all over the world. In any country - his own, everywhere - at home, any language is his native.

It is of dark origin. He has been living in Berlin for the last months, but the Germans do not consider him a German.

- Who do they think he is?

— Pole.

- And who do the Poles think of him?

- Russian, Comrade Stalin.

- In this case, who do the Russians think he is?

- Purebred German.

3

The corners of the huge posters "Rudolf Messer the Magician" have been torn off in some places. People tore, and the wind rain. And according to the huge posters, here and there - small, completely glossy posters: on scarlet background, the same face, the same magnetic brilliance of the eyes, only the text is different: "Rudolf Messer is an enemy people and fatherland". And under the portrait is a number: one and many zeros.

The wet man chuckled: the Gestapo values people dearly.

4

Dead night in Moscow. Heavy rain in Moscow. Rain with snow. Rather - not rain, not snow, and the average between them: fat-bellied drops with crystals inside. It would seem that if ordinary drops hit like a drum, so these, with crystals, and even more so should knock out the shot. So no but they softly slap on the window like this: slap-slap. Droplets of unnatural size Michurin pears in the textbook of botany for the fifth grade.

Once upon a time, hungry, soaking wet, Stalin was leaving through the water, through the puddles. Went nowhere. Rare lanterns creaked, swaying in the wind. He went into the darkness, where there is no lanterns. On the heels of other people's shadows rushed, catching up. And the cold rain slapped Stalin. Not drummed, namely spanked, because the drops were with crystals.

Then Stalin rushed like a wolf, rushed out of the trap and dreamed of breaking out, getting away from the chase, and also dreamed of a warm hearth, dry shoes, a bottle of old Caucasian wine and a good spicy barbecue to keep your mouth on fire. At the same time he dreamed of cold rain with snow, of piercing the bones of the wind, only that he, Stalin, at the same time be under the roof by the stove, and the rain to blurt out

windows and the wind to whistle like a nightingale-robber in a pipe ...

A dream come true: no one is chasing after Stalin anymore. Stalin strangled all those behind him once raced, and all who did not race, but could race. The wind whistles and roars over Moscow, from of bottomless darkness, heavy drops-snowflakes fall in shafts, spank-slap into huge black the Kremlin windows are angry, but they cannot get Stalin. Do not break through the walls of hard stone, do not to break through the glass - there are such glasses that you can't even break through them with an armor-piercing bullet. Whistle. wind, in Kremlin trumpets, be angry like an enemy in a firing squad in Lefortovo!

Quiet and warm at Stalin's. Sleeping Moscow. Stalin does not sleep. Darkness in the corners of the office. But warm darkness. Kind. Friendly. On the work table there is a green lamp, and on a small coffee table also a green lamp: two islands of light in the friendly darkness. And dinner for two. Bachelor. A bottle of wine with a homemade, homemade label. The name is one word in indelible pencil, Georgian pattern. Fire kebabs: half meat, half pepper. And besides the pepper in the barbecue there is still a lot of everything fire-breathing - eat and wipe your tears.

Conversation - a forest stream on pebbles. And the pebbles are sharp.

"Would you like another drink, Comrade Kholovanov?"

- No. Thank you Comrade Stalin.

"Then get down to business. How is the preparation of the Spanish group going?"

- No breaks. Girls learn the program quite satisfactorily.

— The choice of the thirteenth?

"That's right, Comrade Stalin.

Do you think we can choose a decent one?

There are six of them, and we only need one. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses, but one of six to choose from.

What if the group is enlarged?

- Training point - for six candidates ... In the Spanish group - six ...

- Let there be six ... And one spare. A?

"As you command, Comrade Stalin.

- I do not order. See for yourself. I need a worthy candidate...

- You can enter a reserve into the group, but the girls have gone far in mastering the program. Will be able

Does the new girl catch up with the rest?

- This one can. You know her.

Sleep Berlin. Under the yellow lanterns - islands of light, and around the darkness: no light breaks through through fog and rain. A huge beautiful city fell asleep. Calmed down. The traffic light turns green

way for everyone to move forward.

But no one is willing.

A beautiful green light of a traffic light in a thick fog. Fog gives the light a different shade, words inexpressible. It is sad that no one can see that beauty. He alone, chilled wet, he admires her. And it's quite sad because the wet one has to go, but there is nowhere to go. Badly to him because the whole huge city suddenly became a stranger to him. He feels bad because behind the wet the walls are dry, warm rooms, and there, in the rooms, dry people sleep under dry sheets, burying their noses in downy feather beds.

It is bad for a person who does not have a warm, dry room and a feather bed.

And the wet one also knew: behind this creaking lantern, behind this wet posters pasted over pedestal, around this corner of a peeling house, trouble awaits him.

A problem he can't handle.

Somewhere in the distance, a tram creaks along the rails. The wet one sucked in the air, held his breath, exhaled deeply, and resolutely turned the corner. He always went to meet trouble. Myself.

The beam from the pocket flashlight hit my eyes.

- Stop!

And the second beam through frequent drops:

- Who it? Document!

At his right palm, through the cold drops, he felt the hot breath of a dog and fanged sticky mouth. The dog did not touch his palm, and he did not see the dog, but he understood with all his being: near. Without looking at the beast (and still you can't see anything in the dark when two lanterns are in your eyes), he unequivocally defined: Rottweiler, bitch.

A third flashlight arrived in time, small but bright, and also rested in the eyes:

- How similar to Messer! Messer! This is Messer himself! Roo-oo-ki on the wall!

6

- And in conclusion, Comrade Kholovanov ... You promised to tell me something interesting about Rudolf Messer, something that I don't know yet.

- Agents report: the Americans are hunting for Messer.

Stalin got up, went to the window and looked at the drops with crystals for a long time.

What are the Americans?

— Military intelligence.

And they can't catch?

- Can not. Nobody can catch him.

- You said: no one ... Is there anyone else besides the Americans who is hunting for him?

— British intelligence. In addition, the Abwehr, the Gestapo, the criminal police.

“Strange things are happening here, comrade Kholovanov. American intelligence is on the hunt for Rudolf Messer, British intelligence is on the hunt for Rudolf Messer. Why Stalinist intelligence is not hunting for Rudolf Messer?

7

There used to be a monastery here. Now - the Institute of the World Revolution. Swing open steel gates. A long black car pulled up. Holovanov left. He muttered something. By the monastery flashed by: the Dragon was in the Kremlin, returned in a state of heightened ferocity. What will happen now...

Holovanov threw his wet briefcase on the table, the trickles from his cloak onto the stone floor. Walks out corner to corner. The coat does not take off. Looks down at his feet

- Shirmanova to me.

CHAPTER 2

1

Long drops of rain suddenly became shorter, whiter, their outlines were clearly defined, they slowed down their inexorable speed, interrupted their steep flight to the ground, circled around the lanterns, turning into leisurely shaggy snowflakes, and the glorious city of Berlin flew into thick snowfall.

And on the left hand of the sorcerer, illusionist and hypnotist, a bracelet clicked. Clicked on the right. A patterned snowflake fell onto her sleeve. He was pushed into a narrow, tin-plated corridor of the Berlin funnel, and the snowflake disappeared there with him. Immediately with a blow of a rubber club in the liver the direction of its movement was specified: into the compartment! Hands in bracelets - a ring. Into this ring shoved through, missed the chain with the lock. And this lock also clicked. Chain rattling to a powerful beam welded, and the beam is cut into the steel wall, screwed in, tightly attached to it. And they put the dog on the contrary: if you decide to hypnotize, then start with our dog.

The compartment-nook is not locked with one door, but with two. The first is made of steel bars, bars covered with black lacquer, but where the prisoner's hands are, the black paint is worn off, and the previous gray layer is also erased to the metal itself, and the metal is polished to a sparkle thousands of prisoner palms. The second door is a steel sheet with a window. The lattice clanged behind him, and the second, solid, with a window, they did not close, so that the dog had the opportunity of a prisoner contemplate the whole thing. So that the face of the prisoner is warmed by dog's breath.

So that contact is not lost.

2

Funnel - for six people, not counting the guards. But they bring one. The remaining five chambers the pens are empty: for the sake of such a prisoner, personal transport was provided. But all Berlin the funnels are now busy, everyone is overwhelmed, overloaded, everyone is working for wear and tear, overfulfilling plans. Most work: between four and six in the morning. The most dream for potential prisoners. Most moment to take! And they take it. And they fill the funnels to failure. All the way. They are different, funnels, - with a common cell and without, with one common and a dozen personal, there is a limited capacity, and is - boundless, boundless. Limited capacity - for the most important. Such for and submitted him. In general, this is not a funnel at all, but a police bus with a kind of battering ram diesel engine, with a powerful buffer, with tipper wheels, with an armored visor on driver's cab. Up front - police seats, real leather seats, yellow, back - for prisoners. You can enter through the rear armored door with a small window and bars

straight into the prison corridor or through the front part, the police station, where the seats are soft.

The police bus for this case - three escort cars.

Sirens wailed. Blinking, blinding, blue lights on the cabs. Tore the funnel's fun night blizzard, paving the trail on virgin snow. And security cars are behind him. Under the snow water, therefore, fountains of black slurry flew from under the wheels, clods of water-soaked snow. Because behind the cars track: white snow, black trail.

3

If a large thick floor rag is well soaked in a bucket and pulled out without squeezing, then water will flow from it. flow. So it was flowing from the sorcerer - like from a large doormat. And narrow a funnel along the corridor, along the floor of the compartment, along a hard polished cold bench - water. Dirty water. And steam to the ceiling. The hot steam of a dog's mouth. The cold vapor of his breath. Plentiful steam wet clothes. All the windows of the funnel were instantly curtained with mist, and a dim lamp under the ceiling lost its glassy outlines, turning into a blurry yellow spot.

Until that moment, before his arrest, the water drained from him, and at the same time his clothes were soaked was filled with new heavy kilograms of water, but now the filling has stopped, the water only flowed from him, but no longer collapsed on his head and shoulders in abundant jets. cold steam wrapped in a veil. He began to warm up. No, not warming up is not the right word: on the street he felt so cold that he stopped feeling himself, but now in the funnel he began to move away, he was carried away from one freezing state to another, from insensible freezing to a safer, but more vile state of freezing felt. He felt miserable and wet. Spasm stepped back, let go of her cheekbones. And the teeth chattered again.

The tin walls of the corral closet all at once became covered with drops from its evaporation. AND bench too. The bench, like the walls, like the floor and ceiling, is upholstered with tin. Bench too polished to shine by thousands of prisoner asses. The bench is narrow and low - the legs are almost to the chin, so they immediately become numb.

Only he didn't notice it. He walked too long, he was tired. 'Cause the arrest took like a long time ago desired vacation. He longed to sit down and sit. Sit, relax. He has long wanted drink, he wanted a dry shirt and clean socks, he wanted hot water and soap, he wanted razors, he was choked with hunger. He also wanted to sleep. To hell with the arrest! It's even good that arrested! Everyone who has been waiting for arrest knows this feeling of healing relief: that's it! done! you don't have to be afraid anymore. Now you can sleep peacefully.

Until he collapsed on an iron bench, his consciousness did not surrender to fatigue, not recognized her, and then suddenly fatigue fell upon the cold, shaggy, wounded in the side, soaked in the November swamp with a Siberian mammoth and crushed.

Therefore, neither the howling siren, nor the roar of a dog, nor the jerk of the funnel into the white blackness could no longer wake him up. The head only slightly fell off the tin wall and immediately hit it, not disturbing the peaceful sleep of its owner.

He dreamed of a blizzard, billions of huge carved snowflakes in a black sky. He knew in a dream repeated that the largest measured and officially registered snowflake had 132 mm across - wider than a human palm. In a dream he looked at snowflakes and sorted them into ten main types. It's easy to sort by type, but inside its type everything they are different. This is how the bulk of people can easily be divided into races, but within the race of two try to find the same ones ... He was looking for two identical snowflakes, knowing that they are all different, like fingerprints.

He was looking for two identical ones in the firm belief that there were no such.

Have you tried waking up the sorcerer? Tired sorcerer. That's what I haven't tried.

And the Berlin police fell out. It's not easy at all. The sorcerer fell into the abyss of sleep. Him the brain is not the same as ours. He lives nearby, but only in another world. And it's all the other way around, like us normal people.

He thinks differently, he looks at the world differently, and he sleeps, of course, in a special way, gaining magical powers and passions.

How to wake him up? Pour a bucket of ice water on it? He is soaked in water. Hit with a stick shoulders - does not work.

And for some reason, no one dared to hit him on the head with a stick.

The prison walls are one and a half meters of solid brickwork. Well built before. Reliably. Five prison corridors - rays from the center. One warden, without leaving his place, can see all the corridors at once, all five. And all four floors. Each corridor is a gorge. glass a roof over the gorge (do not worry, the glass is covered both from below and from above with steel nets), a glass dome over the center, to which the corridors converge. Cell doors - in rows, along each row is a gallery, above it is another and another. So you can see all the doors at once. All galleries. On all floors. And it's good to count: one row - 25 cameras, above them is a gallery and 25 more, another gallery and more. On the right, there are a hundred cameras in four tiers and on the left, a hundred. One corridor - two hundred cells. Five corridors - thousand.

Clean in jail. Quiet. Gulko. Especially in the morning it's booming, when the cleaners are in the cells by dawn dispersed when the overseers got tired, when the night shift of investigators passed the duty, when the cries of those under investigation subsided. The floors are huge red and white squares. cut out neatly washed and rubbed until sparkling. And in the corners of the baseboards - not a speck of dust, not a speck, no dirt. Some Kaiser built a prison, either Friedrich or Wilhelm. No money sorry. I reasoned in German: cheap work is more expensive - if you put it along the corridors

some crappy floor, then it will have to be changed every hundred years. So it's better put, but to forever. And he ordered the floor to be paved in such a way that it would never be erased, so that it would never be new do not lay. That's why they put granite slabs. Everything will end, all times will expire, and the floor will will remain, even a million generations of German prisoners will not wear it out. People will die out like dinosaurs and mammoths, and the prison will stand for a long time, so that the monkeys who reigned after the people here, in the midst of the ruins and the dense forest that grew up on the ruins, they would arrange their gatherings and danced their monkey dances across the granite floors.

For now, people live here. Men in Black. And people in striped. Stripes three fingers wide: white and grey. And on the head is an elegant cap, also striped. Very nice, huge red and white floor slabs, even play chess, and figures of two colors slide on these slabs, black and striped. If the gray stripes were removed from the striped clothes, the clothes would become white, and a complete analogy turned out: a checkered floor and figures of two colors - black and white, move one straight, others - diagonally, the third - the letter "G".

And if in the prison the galleries were wrapped around with garlands of flowers and a fountain was established in the center, then it would be very if it looked like a huge department store, with ladders, bridges and passages, without windows to the outside, but with glass roofs and a dome. "If you've lost each other, meet at in the center by the large fountain. And if the doors of the cells were unlocked, if they were placed in the cells little shops, if the black and striped ones were changed into colored ones ...

But no one thought of opening the doors of the cells and arranging a fountain in the center. Because the sorcerer they were dragged not past a babbling fountain, but past the guards' booths. They dragged him like he was caught leopard, on stretch marks: a leather collar and steel cables to one guard and to another - if he rushes at one, the other will hold.

And along the corridors, along the guardrooms and utility rooms, through the offices and cells, through One and a half meter walls slipped the news: Messer was caught! And through the ten-meter outer wall, through barbed wire, through rollers, wires and high voltage transformers, past guard towers and observation posts, past searchlights, wakeful dogs and vigilant sentries slipped the news into a huge sleeping city, covered with a snowy feather bed: the Gestapo not dozing, Messer was caught!

6

The second thing in Berlin prisons is sanitation. To keep the lice out of prison.

And the first thing is to hit.

Shall I push the sorcerer into a large high cell without windows. The walls are white tiles, as in operating room. And the floor is cement. Convenient - after the procedure, I turned on the pressure and the blood from the hose with water flush.

Four corners. With clubs.

But they did not take into account two points.

Firstly, the sorcerer Rudolf Messer was sleeping while they were taking him. He slept very little, but even a short rest partially restored his strength.

Secondly, there was no dog. The sorcerer was pushed into the center of the chamber. Pushed with skill, with accuracy worked out over the years: two from the corridor push through the door, the third inside the cell puts his foot in, and fly over the scuffler's leg right to where the floor drops to the covered grate pit. And four clubs flew over him.

But the sorcerer managed to cover his face with his hand in the fall and shout: "Don't beat me!"

The sorcerer shouted not to be beaten.

And they didn't beat him.

The sorcerer sat down on the floor, rubbed his bruised elbow, examined the hand bitten by the dog, and ordered: — Doctor.

7

Run for the doctor. They sent for the supervisor on duty. Drove the car for the boss prisons.

The sorcerer was no longer sitting on the floor, but on a stool brought by someone and commanded:

Call the one with the dog.

They called.

- Kill the dog. And come back here.

- Eat!

Four with sticks did not get bored - the sorcerer ordered them to process the one in the funnel. He showed diligence, moved the sorcerer to the liver.

Four with sticks specified: how to beat?

Answered: as always, you process newcomers.

Doubt: so this is an atrocity!

The sorcerer reassured: nothing, I allow ...

And the dog breeder, who came running with a report on the fulfillment of the order, the sorcerer to be torn to pieces gave to those four with oak, ordered the dog breeder to process in accordance with the generally accepted standard: short, intense, putting soul into it.

The sorcerer gave many orders and, obeying him, the investigative corps was opened, and in the huge prison stoker, the guards threw tight folders into the flames. Obeying orders, chief the guard, rattling keys, unlocked the cells, and the outer guard unlocked the heavy gates. True, the prisoners not in a hurry to take advantage of freedom. This is how the communists are arranged: if they gave freedom, but not

received an order to use it - do not use it. And the communists remained in their cells.

So are the Social Democrats. German discipline does not allow a Social Democrat from Hitler's prison escape.

But the Berlin urks did not force themselves to ask, they instantly realized that Messer of the Berlin teach the police a lesson. The essence of the lesson: no need for sorcerers, hypnotists and conjurers in prison planting will cost more. You can teach a lesson in the best possible way by unlocking the cameras and gates. Therefore, as soon as the news slipped through the sleepy prison that Messer had been caught, the urks started up, they threw down their cards, crowded at the cell doors, waiting for the keys and doors to rattle.

We didn't have to wait very long: the locks click, the bolts clang, the doors rattle and the prisoner's heels clatter.

Fleeing, the Berlin and All-German chaps did not beat the guards and did not burn down the prison strove - would sooner carry away the soles, who knows when the gates will slam. Because - grab a little coat in a cloakroom or a warder's overcoat, cover the tiger stripes on the back and run to lanes, cellars, dens. Get there before dawn. And there - ishi-fistula ...

But, running past the office, the lads, knowing with an animal instinct that Messer was somewhere nearby, yelled thanks and greetings to him: "Wizard! Let's not forget the age! Wizard, if someone needs to be cut, so just whistle!"

CHAPTER 3

1

His profession is interesting and rare: an executioner-filmmaker. Executioners on the planet apparently invisibly - like uncut dogs. And so many filmmakers. But the executioners There are very few filmmakers. And the professions seem to be related, and are common executioners with cinematic inclinations, as well as filmmakers with executioners, but still find a specialist who would equally combine the qualities of a talented executioner an innovator and gifted cinematographer, is not so easy. Because the executioners-filmmakers respect and appreciate. Their work is generously paid. They are honored and respected.

In narrow, of course, circles.

Of course, no one has ever called him an executioner-filmmaker. Job title called the performer. More formally - the executioner of sentences. And quite officially - executor of sentences, cinematographer. Through a comma.

And for his own - Vasya.

For those who are younger - Uncle Vasya. In recent years, Vasya has been working more and more on knitting, therefore, more often he is called Vasya the knitter. And he did not forget the work of the cinematographer, because he Vasya is also called a filmmaker.

Uncle Vasya, the filmmaker, has a lot of work to do - arrests are rampant in Moscow. Arrest is not an executioner business, it's not for a virtuoso executioner to engage in such an unworthy business.

But there is no way out - Moscow needs to be cleaned. Because the executioners, who do not need to be shot yet, Comrade Stalin threw executioners into the arrests, who are urgently needed at this very moment shoot. Therefore, Uncle Vasya, the executioner-cinematographer, is thrown into a low, dirty, work unworthy of his high rank - to arrests.

And then there's the party congress.

2

In Moscow - the XVIII Congress of the CPSU (b), the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). The consignment - union of like-minded people. The Party Congress is a forum of the best people in the country. Morning. Kremlin. Thundering chimes. Honor to the best people in the country. Of course, they are safe, too. Without her no way. Therefore, for the common good, so that all together do not explode from the charge brought by the enemy, each delegate is individually searched, politely but thoroughly. Delegates warned: leave everything at the hotel, have only a party card in your pocket.

Such demands are carried out with enthusiasm - Comrade Stalin is doing the right thing, not everything

after all, the enemies are still uprooted, and among the delegates to the congress one may be found ... will carry into the hall fountain pen, that pen will bang - all the best people of the country will explode at once. What then with the country will? Therefore, only a membership card. No matter how you turn it, you can't mount an explosive charge in a party card, and if you install it, it is not very powerful.

In principle, a delegate to a party congress does not need to have anything in his pockets: they feed the delegate hearty, drink plentifully. In the evenings - concerts. Everything is free. All without money. Can be with empty walk in pockets. Like under communism.

At the entrance to the hall, each delegate is provided with a wonderfully made notebook for notes and a fountain pen. Where you can still find this one! Pens marvelous - red and blue, choose any. And ink of all colors.

Where can you see this, so that a fountain pen writes in green! And feathers of any thickness, any softness. And the names of fountain pens are different: "Moscow", "Progress", "Five Year Plan", "Industrialization"; And manufacturing firms are different: "Plant named after Stalin", "Paris Commune", "F-ka them. Gorky".

The delegate rejoices: the congress will end, but the pen will remain in his pocket. All of Siberia to the surprise. AND notepad too. And the delegates are also rejoicing: soon the entire Soviet people will write with such pens - production has already been established, but there is still not enough for everyone.

Wonderful fountain pens are immediately used: everything about the delegates is known, but before entering the hall fill in the form again, delegate, so that the credentials committee sums up and announces in completion of the congress, how many men among the delegates, how many women, how many workers, how many peasants, and how many stratum - labor intellectuals. Will proudly announce the credentials committee congress, and then the whole country, the whole world, how many participants in the Great October Revolution are among the delegates socialist revolution, and how many - the Civil War, how many order bearers, how many Party members with pre-October experience, how many with post-October experience...

In the lobby - interesting acquaintances, lively conversations. Found the power of the Soviet shepherd for clouds. Shepherd in a bathrobe. It was delivered like this. Also a delegate. Never in a person's life did not descend his mountain. I have never seen clouds from below, I have always looked at clouds only from above. This is what is needed. Our dear power found him, let him down from the mountain. He does not understand Russian. Is not trouble. In our multinational homeland, speak any language. Who needs to understand. Delegate with the mountains are the best of the best, that's why he solves state problems. You have to raise your hand. Together with everyone. The commanders of the Red Army surrounded the shepherd, a story in an incomprehensible language hear about how to raise sheep.

3

Songs are thundering in the Grand Kremlin Palace, a Turkmen comrade beats a tambourine, girls cotton ginnery in Asian trousers, Asian dances are dancing, journalists are fussing in the hall, photo flashes shine, movie cameras murmur, soothe, lull ...

Democracy is complete. Overkill. Election of a new composition of the Central Committee completely secret. Each delegate has a list of candidates. You can cross anyone off the list. Not only that - instead of the crossed out you can enter anyone you like. Who do you want. Not easy you can, but you must add your chosen one to the list. If you cross out one last name, and instead of you can't write in anyone who has been crossed out, then this paper is considered invalid: otherwise everyone can be cross out who will rule the country then? So when you cross out one, add the other.

A young Chekist promoted from Taishetlag, representing the interests of the Siberian Bolsheviks, incredulously feeling the voting booths: where are the cameras hidden? If everyone will cross out whoever they want and enter whoever they want, then where are we let's dance? Is Comrade Stalin really not in control of the election process? Doesn't care about future composition of the Central Committee? Did he let go of the reins?

The Chekist feels the booths, they say, soundly done, but he himself is surprised: cameras really no. There is nowhere to put them in, the booths are polished laths and satin red, all translucent, you can't manage to insert a camera. On the other hand, covers that satin strikethrough-writer...

So... Come into the booth and cross out whoever you want... Write in... Miracles, and nothing more...

4

The Party Congress has a visible side, a façade side, so to speak, and an invisible side, organizational. It is a difficult task to organize a congress. How much to do! Every little thing remember! The same pens. Where to get these? Only in the rotten West. People were driven to London, they ordered what they needed. Bourgeois, of course, balk, roam, they cannot understand the order. They can sell pens of any color, any shape, in any quantity. It is only important to them that "Parker" was written on the handle, but this just doesn't suit us, we need "Dawn East" meant.

The bourgeoisie are resisting: their production is set up and set up, for every pen with In manufacturing, they mold their own stamp, and the restructuring of production will cost a lot. Nothing, our answer, we pay for the restructuring. Whatever it takes. Resist again: we release the best in the world of pens and we cannot allow our product under another brand to be released. And our they answer that very little is needed, that from the great country of workers and peasants those pens never it will turn out that we are not competitors to you in the field of consumer goods, we still have your "Parker" will never. Okay, the bourgeois say, only it will cost a lot ...

Here is another conversation! We won't stand up for the price.

But that's not all. Having received those pens, you need to get a card for each, assign a number to each, with each feature to remove: refilled with green ink, ink brightness... pen thickness...

microscopic defects of the pen... and so on and so forth. Then that pen will be handed to the delegate: cross out, comrade dear, whoever you want on the list. You can cross out Comrade Stalin himself, if you Comrade Stalin is not to his liking, and the examination will establish that pen No. 1241 crossed out the great name.

And in order not to confuse, the strictest accounting is organized, to whom they gave what pen (their there is no delegate, this was taken care of during the search). Accounting is organized as follows: first, for example, delegate Kruzhkin was registered, here you are, Comrade Kruzhkin, pen No. it will come that the pen has a number in the general catalog. It is good that in the head of the delegate such thoughts don't come. And the camera captures which pen was given to whom. Joyfully, the camera chirps like that, and happy operator. And the envoy of the people is proud - they captured him for history, at the moment registration of delegates of the historical congress.

It is clear that it will be difficult to distinguish details in newsreel footage, and yet it was not in vain that they bought pens seven different forms. Then the frames of the chronicle and the catalogs of pens will be compared so that there is no confusion happened. And any details, any details will come in handy...

But delegates can change hands! One admires the miracle pen and the other admires. Come on, the first one says, let's swing!

What will happen if the delegates, not understanding the great meaning, change hands? Do not be afraid. Provided. Movie cameras are not asleep, they fix. And many among the delegates glides the dark people, also allegedly delegates, but go and figure out who is a delegate and who is not. And where the movie camera does not look with its keen eye, in the women's toilet, for example, there is a girl an Uzbek woman, a cotton ginner, in Asian trousers, at a huge mirror, binds one hundred and ten of her pigtails...

And he sees everything.

It's not in vain that so many braids were invented for her. And a full-wall mirror is also not in vain.

But in the end, this is not the main thing. Graphological expertise is the trump card. Cross out comrade, any delegate on the list. And write anyone. It doesn't matter who you write, even Trotsky himself, important - with your own hand. Enter who you want, thereby leaving your autograph, and the guys from Institute of the World Revolution will calculate you. Handwriting samples of each were collected long ago, and even with registration, each personally filled out the questionnaire, ostensibly for the mandate commission. Guys Holovanov, only the handwriting with which you put the vile name on the list is left to compare with the handwriting your questionnaire. And graphologists know their business well. They won't make a mistake.

The calculation of strikeouts proceeds independently along many lines at once: experts on pens they give a conclusion, handwriting experts give their own, there are other experts ... Each group works regardless of others. Then the results will be compared, if discrepancies are revealed, work will continue. There are methods...

And do not think that only those who have crossed out the name of Comrade Stalin are being calculated. Not at all.

Everyone is calculated. Here someone crossed out the name of the new head of the NKVD, Comrade Beria. Who is on this made up his mind? And none other than the favorite of Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, the director of the Norilsk metallurgical plant of the NKVD of the USSR Comrade Zavenyagin. Wai, how interesting. Together - friends comrades, you won't spill water, but how does it come to secret voting ...

Comrade Stalin jumped when he heard this. The main thing now is that Comrade Beria by chance didn't know what his favorite was. Let them remain comrades. And Zavenyagin's characteristic: the old Chekist Zavenyagin went through all the purges, all the controls, and here you are - he believed in democracy, I lost my vigilance, I decided to use the right to cross out ... There are fools in the world! These need to be protected. And to place the necessary posts.

Or maybe such a step is not at all dictated by stupidity? What is this? Despair? dying protest? Calculation? Calculation for what?

5

But what to do if the delegate of the congress, using the right of secret ballot, crossed out a great name from the list, but didn't write another one, didn't leave his autograph? You can't have one line consider an autograph, and handwriting experts will not help. Rely only on the conclusions of those who will look for microdefects in the handle?

No, comrades. Several examinations. And the most important (where will you get away from it?) - expertise fingers. The list of candidates is on wonderful paper. Paper delivered from Sweden. Not simple paper - among hundreds of varieties of good paper, we chose the one on which fingers are best are printed. Like on glass.

But after all, in the printing house, when the lists were printed ... Well, just not. In a special printing house lists were printed. Printed with a concept. And they were delivered to the Kremlin with a concept. And laid out tables, again, with caution. So at the time of issuing the list to the delegate, no fingerprints was not on the list. Theoretically, only the fingers of a comrade delegate can appear on the list - received a list, crossed out one, entered another and throw it in the ballot box. In the wrong hands, that sheet is not hit. And here, in front of the ballot boxes, the corresponding comrades vigilantly look at in order. The main thing is that someone else's hand does not paw the leaf.

Well, the laughing girl with the parachute badge, who distributes the sheets to the delegates, is her Will there be fingers too? This point has been taken into account. I explain: firstly, the girl is her own. If her fingers and imprinted, then it's easy to figure it out: here are her fingers, and here are yours, comrade delegate. But not the girl leaves prints. The pads of her pink fingers are covered with S-4 transparent varnish. Lacquer delivered from France. She works without gloves, and leaves no prints.

So if some upstart promoter gets hit in the head with the hops of a semi-childish mischief, if he scribbles on a great name, without leaving an autograph, then he still has nowhere to go:

will not reach his Siberia. They will shy away the encryption there: they say, as a fast-growing, as a delegate to the congress, your comrade-in-arms has received a new appointment for secret work, with a hint, like a spy.

But he will fall not into spies, but into another place. The life stream will carry him to a completely different side.

And it is hardly correct to call that stream a vital one.

6

Uncle Vasya is a knitter, he is also Vasya the filmmaker, know for yourself the handle of the camera is twisting, the delegates shoots joyful. Vote, dear comrades, cross out who you like, write in who I want ... There were a lot of you like that. at previous congresses. Uncle Vasya is the same for all of you and photographed, dear. For example, at the last XVII Congress. Delegates then, as now, too pretended to be honest citizens. I must admit, from the outside it seemed so.

It seemed that all of them (or most of them) were our native Soviet people... it turned out? It turned out that almost without exception the previous congress was hostile, espionage, treacherous and destructive. More than half of the delegates soon had to be shot. Many, oh many, Uncle Vasya then re-filmed. But already individually. On death row.

It is interesting to twist the old chronicle: here the delegate's head is bent, here is the delegate of the executioner's boots licks, here he is, the bastard, shouting that he loves Comrade Stalin with passion, that he is ready to give his life ... Well, give. What is the problem? Boots, why drool?

Oh, how Comrade Stalin loves to watch such shots. Many times without a break. And then orders the same enemies to be shown not in the execution corridor, but at the congress: here they are - proud, pot-bellied, puffed up, in decorations, here they are sitting in the presidium, here they are shouting speeches from the rostrum. Now you can immediately see: that one, decorated, well, of course, the enemy, that's what a sweet smile he has. But then, at the last congress (Uncle Vasya honestly admits this to himself), his suspicion fell on certain types, but not the majority. Vasya looks at the old footage, marvels at his naivety: Well, how could he not recognize that mustachioed one - his eyes, his eyes are hostile. And what amplify dismissed! Well, it's obvious! Isn't it written on his face that he's a spy? Not even disguised! Eh, screwed up. You look at the old footage - trembling through the body: Comrade Stalin is alone, and around him, the enemies swirl in flocks, and rush about. And in their picaresque eyes you can see: conspiracies weave, hatch plans!

And then there were elections at that previous congress. Just like now. Whom will the enemies choose could? Of course, the enemies were chosen, the spies were chosen by the Anglo-Japanese and Polish-Turkish, selected pests. Almost the entire Central Committee turned out to be espionage. Uncle Vasya how is it now remembers: in total, 71 members of the Central Committee and 68 candidates were elected at that congress. Uncle Vasya must all of them remember. Because clients. Or potential clients. Quite a bit of time has passed, but

111 of those members and candidates have already been arrested. And rarely anyone else is whole. Comrade Stalin has a flair for enemies. He sees right through them.

Uncle Vasya feels that they will soon take the 112th from that composition of the Central Committee. Zavenyagina Avraamia Pavlovich, director of the Norilsk Iron and Steel Works of the NKVD. Everything tends to that. At Yagoda led the great construction projects of communism? Supervised. Did you build it under Yezhov? Erected. So, it's time for the firing cellar. And the time has come to take the 113th from that composition. Yezhov Nikolai Ivanovich. This is how it emerges: member of the Central Committee, secretary of the Central Committee, candidate for members of the Politburo, People's Commissar of Water Transport and former People's Commissar Internal Affairs, but he was not even nominated as a delegate to the new congress.

So soon...

7

And you don't need to think that, they say, it's raining with snow in Berlin, but in Moscow it's like no rain, no snow. No, dear comrades, it is raining in Moscow, and also with snow. Better than Berlin. And also some people think that, they say, there are arrests in Berlin, but no arrests in Moscow, what about Berlin funnels roam, but in Moscow it seems not.

You are mistaken, my dears, and they roam around Moscow. Very intense too. Any Berlin envy.

In Moscow, there are a lot of arrests. Massive arrests. Extras. The power of a comrade ends Yezhov. He has no more respect. He has no universal love. The end is near. Only to him alone can't believe it's close. It hasn't been taken yet. But his team is being squeezed, infringed. And take his guys without noise. Arrest those who arrested, shoot those who shot.

There are, however, more important things...

CHAPTER 4

1

Deputy Director of the Institute of the World Revolution, Comrade Kholovanov, after a meeting with The Most Important, having received the most valuable instructions, returned in a state of visible irritation and first of all (as everyone expected) he demanded to report to himself the head of the special group control of Comrade Shirmanov.

- Comrade Shirmanov, how is the preparation of the German group going?
- Order.
- French?
- No breaks.
- Spanish?
- Everything is fine.
- Should we introduce a spare girl into the Spanish group?
- The training point is designed for six people ...
- Nothing. Let there be six and one spare.
- Will the new girl be able to catch up with the rest, will she be able to learn everything that the girls have already learned?
- This one can.
- Okay, we'll do it tomorrow.
- Now about the main thing. Comrade Shirmanov, what do you know about a man named Rudolf

Messer?

The commander of the special group, Shirmanov, noted official notes in Holovanov's question, and therefore answered, inserting the word "comrade" into the appeal:

- Comrade Holovanov, Rudolf Messer is a world-famous illusionist and magician.
- You, Comrade Shirmanov, do not tell me what everyone knows.

"We know that British military intelligence, the Americans, several German organizations: Abwehr, Gestapo...

"Don't you think, comrade Shirmanov, that we have here, at the Institute of the World Revolution, strange things happen? Hitler's intelligence is hunting for Messer, British intelligence is hunting, the American is hunting, and why is Stalin's intelligence not hunting for Rudolf Messer?

Shirmanov gritted his teeth.

2

There are two ways to assign tasks to subordinates. The first way - the corporal passes to the soldiers

order from a superior: the foreman ordered to paint the fence! In this case, the corporal, as it were, removed from the process of decision-making and problem setting. In this case, the corporal, as it were, he puts himself on the same level with his subordinates: I am a small person, I was ordered, and I convey to you, that is, both you and I are executors of someone else's will.

The second way is to turn any order issued from dizzying heights into your own. own, to give it on their own behalf, without referring to higher authorities and their will: you will, bastards, paint the fence! I so want! I ordered so! I commanded so! This is my will!

It is not for me to discuss the pros and cons of these methods, I will only say that a personal pilot and Comrade Stalin's bodyguard, deputy director of the Institute of the World Revolution Kholovanov Alexander Ivanovich, undercover pseudonym Dragon, always acted only in the second way. Kholovanov-Dragon did not say that Comrade Stalin ordered to catch Messer, not at all, - Holovanov turned Stalin's will into his own and acted only on his own behalf: I need Rudolf Messer! Bring on the sorcerer! Where is Rudolf Messer?! Catch and report!

And not even that. Everyone knows how to set a task like "catch and report". Slave to it six months later, they will answer: it was not possible to deliver, because they could not catch, but they could not catch, so how they couldn't find it, but they couldn't find it, because ...

Therefore, the order must be given not only on your own behalf (they will be more respected subordinates and superiors), but also in the form of a question. It's one thing: I order you to paint the fence! Another - but hasn't the fence been painted yet?

In the first case, subordinates will perform (if they will) only what is ordered. In In the second case, they are given the broadest initiative of action - they are obliged to do everything themselves. You have to find work for yourself. The commander is only occasionally interested in: is it weapons not cleaned yet? Hasn't the trench been dug? Hasn't the city been captured yet? Who Is this personally to blame?

In the first case, the commander is forced to think about everything himself, remember everything, take everything into account, remind all subordinates. In the second case, he makes his subordinates about everything think, remember everything, do everything without reminders, the commander only turns their zeal in the direction he needs.

About Rudolf Messer, Holovanov never spoke with his subordinates and the task did not bet on his capture. Even in the form of a question. It's OK. You must think for yourself. themselves should take the initiative, ask for permission to capture and report on the execution.

Kholovanov sat down, and the head of the special group stretched out in front of him. Situation: none of Kholovanov's subordinates didn't guess to set the task of capturing Rudolf Messer for himself, therefore, Holovanov was now forced to set such a task. And he put her in his usual in the form of a short, forceful interrogation. In each question - not explicitly expressed, but quite

a clear accusation of treason to the Motherland and the great cause of the World Revolution:

"Haven't you caught Rudolf Messer yet?" Marvelous. Isn't Rudolf Messer sits in our basement? Strange. Can't you just wake him up and drive him to my cabinet? This is more than strange. And who, Comrade Shirmanov, is to blame? You are not personally to blame! Well Of course it's not your fault! And who is to blame? Maybe I'm to blame? A? It's my fault? Oh, and it's not my fault! And on tom thanks. Who then? To which of your subordinates did you assign the task of searching and capturing Messer? Ah, you didn't set such a task for anyone ... Let's write it down. What exactly are you doing in your group? And don't you think...

Terrible words about sabotage have not yet been uttered, but at the tip of the Draconian tongue they were already twirling like little devils around a frying pan with sinners, dancing.

3

There is another commander's secret. A smart commander bends the line according to one parameter - tells subordinates what to do. But it does not indicate HOW.

If the commander begins to indicate how to do it, then with his instructions he fetters initiative of subordinates and takes unnecessary responsibility for the consequences. About HOW must be done, let the subordinates themselves think. Way their heads hurt. If the commander did not indicate ways to accomplish the task, then in case of failure he will be right: yes, I ordered to do it, only it was necessary to act differently, wisely.

- In general, Shirmanov, my innate kindness prevents me from shooting you immediately. Understood? I give you one last chance. Take any funds, any agents, all ladies, but Get me Messer. Get it out of the ground. Understood? If some kind of intelligence dragged him away, then you are from tear it out of the mouth of an animal and put it here for me, on this rug. Understood?

Shirmanov croaked indistinctly. And then Holovanov repeated the question:

I ask, do you understand?

- Understood.

- A week to search. A week for kidnapping. A week for delivery. Three weeks later Rudolf Messer should be here. If in three weeks he does not appear in Moscow, you are finished. Maybe he miraculously appear here, then you are saved. Now get your group up. Work. Every day - a progress report on my desk. Understood?

- Understood.

- I am surprised at my kindness: I give you three weeks to save your own skin. Fuck it I need your skin? Go and save her. Rely only on yourself and on a miracle. And remember the words of a friend Stalin: there are no miracles.

4

The sorcerer was no longer sitting on a stool, but in the chair of the head of the prison, he heard a roar prisoner's horseshoes and cries of thanks, smiled blissfully, giving short orders:

"Don't tell Himmler about me.

- Listen, do not report.

- No no. I don't order. You just need to take your time - report that you caught me,

and then the confusion comes out. And I'm here, as you know, I won't linger, I'll eat, dry myself and leave. Where, By the way, my lunch?

5

Baths in Berlin prisons are painfully good. The purity is dazzling, the light is soft, the air fresh, excellent heat. First - a powerful shower, then the sorcerer was kneaded and straightened, once again in the shower put, after that - a dry fire-breathing steam room. With beer. Beer in little greens bottles, bottles in a wooden tub, in ice. Lots of bottles.

In order not to be misinterpreted, I will make a reservation: this bath is not for everyone. And not even for all overseers. Bathhouse for senior management - for the head of the prison and those who authorized to check. The bath is stuck between the outer wall and the stoker. Behind the outer wall not a Berlin street, but another prison. Women's. They are like two different prisons, but under a single administration, with housekeeping services common to two prisons, so that two laundries do not hold or two X-ray rooms. Because here, in the area of the commander's bath, rubbed between others buildings, two prisons seem to merge into a single whole.

That's where our sorcerer got to. For some reason, he was quickly transferred from the category of prisoners to the category inspectors. The order in Berlin is strong - the inspectors can descend at any time of day and night. Therefore, at any time of the day or night, that bath is not exactly hidden, but in the official list of prison premises is not entered - is located in a ten-minute readiness to accept any commission. Only the gates dissolve, only the machines of the commission in the prison yard is rolled in, and here in the bathhouse the couples are already quickly raised to the appropriate heights. And the attractions in the bath are prepared for every taste in abundance. And a lot in that bath a variety of pleasures are allowed to taste ...

The prison attendant, I will tell you, is a special breed of the human race. How do they get into prison bathhouse attendants, I'm not given to know. If I had known how, I myself would have become a Butyrka attendant. But not I know, that's why I survive with the base labor of a writer.

So: even the German prison attendants respected the sorcerer.

"Why don't they shoot him?"

So the bullets fly past him.

- Who is more important - our dad, the head of the administrative and economic department, or the sorcerer some?

- It seems to me that the sorcerer is more important. It may be that he is more important than the boss himself prisons.

They whistled: if so, then he should be entertained in full, with the girls entertainers.

But the sorcerer was in a hurry. Limited to beer. And drank a little. Only to quench your thirst. AND I kept repeating to myself: "Don't fall asleep! Don't fall asleep! Don't fall asleep!"

He knew he was defenseless in his sleep. For two days he managed to sleep only a little, in a funnel. Huge hefty attendants rub it with washcloths, the bones rule, and in the head there is a magic ringing. I want the sorcerer to send everything to hell and close his eyes just for a moment and keep them that way closed. Quite a short time. Just a minute.

The sorcerer refused a bath. The bath is relaxing. The shower is invigorating. Because - shower, shower, shower.

His steamed cheeks were shaved by the prison barber. From the communists. Of those who run to on a blizzard night, into an unknown, disturbing freedom from a warm prison bath, I didn't want to. The sorcerer ordered the communist: be careful with the razor. And the communist obeyed. Easy for others order. And how to give yourself such an order to obey? And the command is so simple: "Don't sleep!"

And it is so difficult to execute this command.

6

Beria Lavrenty Pavlovich, the new head of the NKVD, ordered the corridor to be blocked with safes. From cubes-safes, a steel wall in the corridor was folded-erected-built: two loopholes for shooting and a narrow passage between the safes - only one to crawl through and push through. A having pushed through, you will run into another wall of the same safes, into another narrow embrasure you will run into a machine-gun barrel. Passages in steel walls do not fall against each other, therefore, squeezing (if allowed) into one slot, turn into a small labyrinth, and only then squeeze into another gap.

Security with a DP machine gun - in the corridor in front of the wall, another guard with a dog in the labyrinth between two walls, and another guard behind the second wall. Windows of corridors and executive offices boarded up with wooden shields from the inside.

There are three reasons for this: firstly, it is impossible to aim at the windows, and secondly, a grenade through the window will not fly in, and thirdly, in the event of an external explosion, glass fragments will not fly through the offices and corridors, will amaze the inhabitants of corridors and office rooms.

The shields on the windows are knocked together from fresh boards. Through the cracks - the rays of the sun. But the main shields hold back the flow of light. Therefore, Ilyich's light bulbs, made in Sweden by the company "Erickson", in the corridors and in the offices do not go out.

From pine shields - the heady smell of resin, the smell of winter taiga, the smell of logging, the smell of Amurlag.

Entrance to Comrade Beria's office is by invitation only. Anyone will be searched in the corridor to the very last thread. So called and warned not to have too much. The time will come, and comrade Beria will drive around in Moscow in an open limousine, demonstrating to his enemies that he is not afraid of anyone. But that time has not come yet. Now the Augean stables of the NKVD need to be cleaned. And the people in the NKVD nervous and armed. Because the corridor is blocked. Therefore, anyone who is without invitations to the corridor the bossy nose will stick. Do not get close to enemies.

And poisoning the new boss will not work out for anyone: he arrived directly from the Caucasus and on sidings Comrade Beria's personal train stopped at the Kursk railway station, with reliable security, with cooks, with a margin food, with everything necessary for work and leisure.

But no time to rest, no time to drink. Comrade Beria is working. That's why they cook for him by train and by car under escort, lunches and dinners are delivered to Lubyanka. Soup in a saucepan Paris: open the lid - a fragrance the likes of which cannot be found in nature. Lubyansky something chefs what trust? The Lubyanskys are still Yezhov's choice. Everyone needs to be changed.

And there is no time for comrade Beria to please himself with pleasures. Women from his service in idleness mired, locked in the car. Not up to them. So that they would not die of boredom, Comrade Beria ordered them Lenin's "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" to study. Busy Lavrenty Pavlovich. No comfort no booze, no women. I took only three with me to the Lubyanka - serve dinner, narzan pour, remove the plates.

7

Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov moved his left hand. The glass slid, hung for a moment on the edge table and crashed to the floor. Sound-wise, it's rubbish. I wonder if it was empty or? .. Drawn by Nikolai Ivanovich looked at the table, and his consciousness fixed the fact: it was empty. I felt the table with my right hand in front of you - another glass is needed. There was no other at hand, it was not probed. Flashed: possible from the throat ... He grimaced at such a dirty thought: Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov is not like that throat lap! And generally speaking! We'll see! Let's see who gets it! He tore the collar so as not to strangled. I felt the marshal's stars on the buttonholes. First on the left buttonhole, then on the right ...

Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov was the head of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs - the NKVD. After Comrade Stalin concurrently gave him another job - to lead the people's Commissariat of Water Transport - NKVT. Then Comrade Yezhov was turned away from the NKVD, he remained

only in the NKVT. But the title - General Commissioner of State Security - remained. Not stripped him of his title. So he walks around the People's Commissariat for Water Transport in the form of a General commissar with marshal's stars. And money is paid to him, as is customary among us, separately for the position of the People's Commissar for Water, and in addition for the title of General Commissioner, although to Recently, he has nothing to do with the affairs of the NKVD.

CHAPTER 5

1

Order: hand over personal weapons to the highest command staff of the NKVD. Until further notice.

But orders don't help.

Personal weapons were handed over, but each Chekist of the highest set has something extra stocked up. How many enemies each shot in twenty years, and at each execution, at each confiscation of amazing little things came across. For a collection. And revolvers and pistols in that number.

And every Chekist has an honorary weapon hidden: "To the valiant fighter against the hydra counter-revolution... From the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council. For Yaroslavl. For Moore. For Tambov. For Bataysk. Behind Crimean shooting. For Rostov. From Comrade Trotsky. From Tukhachevsky. From Antonov-Ovseenko. From Bukharin. From Zinoviev. Who took this weapon into account? So it is in the chest. And let it lie. Only you need to navigate - rip off the gift plates at the very moment as the donor of his showed an enemy essence ...

As the enemies were identified and exterminated, the comrades of the Chekists ripped off silver plates with donated pistols. And now the time has come - they themselves are included in the same enemy flock. Riding in the morning Big Chekist chief to the Lubyanka. He goes and does not know if he will return to his beautiful wife, to the kids small. Goes to work. Yes, only he can stay there at work. And the expression went like this: burnt out at work.

And Lubyanka seems to have been invented for such a turn of events: here you have offices bosses, here you have torture chambers, here you have a execution cellar. From office to cellar. In order not to strain the legs, the elevator is arranged. Calls Comrade Beria chiefs Yezhovtsev for a conversation. And from the conversation, not everyone returns to the offices. Instead of them, new people The Lubyanka is filling up. New bosses. Berievtsy.

So the time has come for the Yezhovites to use the donated weapons. And enjoy: shoot at offices. They shoot at the dachas. They shoot at apartments.

Another fashion went to the windows to jump. Right on Lubyanka Square. Under the feet of workers and peasants. At least pull the circus nets under the windows and catch them.

The fashion has gone among the Chekists of the Yezhov spill to come to work and the windows are a little open up. Like for ventilation. And fashionable among them all day working more and more on top floors to hang around.

This is not good. It is necessary to fight this. Therefore, not only arrests at the Lubyanka, but also awards. Comrade Beria took out a box with the "Honorary Chekist" badge, put it in front of him. AND

to the messenger: call comrade Akazis.

2

Everything was foreseen, everything was taken into account. Comrade Akazis was searched at the entrance in the morning: they say, are you fulfilling an order not to carry personal weapons with you? Established: the order is carried out by Comrade Akazis, there are no weapons wears. And before that, at night, in the office of Comrade Akazis, there was a secret search. Even the safes were opened. There are no weapons. After that, a challenge. But just before the call to Comrade Akazis, she looked into the office secretary. For nothing. Make sure the windows are closed. And the messenger is instructed: if to the window rush - do not allow the window to open. They also instructed the messenger additionally: calling comrade Akazis to the office of comrade Beria, smile sweeter writhing! Because not on the execution of comrade Akazis is called, but to receive a reward.

Everything was foreseen. But the messenger outplayed - too sweet for comrade Akazis smiled. But Comrade Akazis did not open the window. He had everything planned in advance. Only the door opened, only the messenger's toothy smile flashed, Comrade Akazis rushed to the window. Without wasting time in vain, without wasting precious moments on opening, went icebreaker through glass. Through the double. Breaking it into crunchy pieces, tearing apart the sparkling splashing barrier with fingers, palms, elbows, chest, face ...

3

Comrade Beria closed the box with the sign "Honorary Chekist". Threw it in a drawer. The next one will come in handy. If it doesn't jump out the window. And comrade Akazis is a pity. Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria was pitiful. Appreciated good workers. And sorry. Akazis was preparing a great future. From Comrade Beria planned to leave all the center Yezhovites of one Akazis alive. And elevate. Comrade Akazis must have forgotten that today is exactly twenty years of his work in the organs. Probably not I was waiting for awards and promotions on such a day.

Or maybe he really was a Uruguayan spy, as they talked about him?

If the conscience is clear, why did you rush out the window?

4

Wonderful sheet of paper. It crunches like money. Translucent. In the upper right corner - "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" Below is a list of those whom the party considers worthy join the new composition of its Central Committee. Holovanov put aside a stack of leaves, and left this one in front of him - during a secret ballot on this sheet, someone crossed out from the list the new head of the NKVD Comrade Beria.

The examination established: crossed out with pen number 413. This pen was issued to the delegate of the congress

Zavenyagin A.P.

An independent graphological examination gave its conclusion: Zavenyagin.

Fingerprint: Zavenyagin.

Surveillance: Zavenyagin.

Examination No. 7: Zavenyagin.

Holovanov puts Zavenyagin's personal file on Stalin's table. Comrade Stalin knows everything about Comrade Zavenyagin. But the case flips again.

... Zavenyagin Avraamy Pavlovich, born April 14, 1901 ... Member of the Party since the age of 16 ... Headed the county committee... district... political department of the division... Crushed mutinies... Proved himself... Thrown to the industry ... At the age of 30, the director of Magnitogorsk - Magnitogorsk plant. He led vigorously. He showed Bolshevik firmness and determination. no mercy knew. In submission had 35 thousand prisoners, 12 thousand guards and freemen. Built Magnitogorsk in any frost. Forty and below. On the construction of Magnitogorsk killed 27 thousand prisoners ... As the labor force was spent, he received a new one ... The construction was completed ahead of schedule ... At the previous At the 17th Party Congress, People's Commissar for Heavy Industry Sergo Ordzhonikidze sang of the labor feat builders: "Magnitogorsk is led by comrades Zavenyagin and Klishevich, two of our young engineers and along with them all the young people who work there. They lead and led Magnitogorsk and at forty degrees frosts, and they were not bad ... "At that last congress, Zavenyagin was among the 68 candidates of the Central Committee ... After Klishevich, a young engineer who, in forty-degree frosts, together with Zavenyagin led Magnitogorsk - they shot ... For wrecking ... Sergo Ordzhonikidze, who sang of the labor feat of Zavenyagin and Klishevich, burned down at work ... He worked so hard that even at suicide was not strong enough. I had to help...

And Zavenyagin, for his ability to build at a Stalinist pace in forty-degree frost, was thrown The Arctic Circle for the construction of the Norilsk plant. In his submission now 107 thousand prisoners, 34 thousand guards and freemen ... Zavenyagin mines nickel. Zavenyagin extracts oil. Zavenyagin mines coal. Produces well. Iron Man Zavenyagin - no frost fears. He does not care about frosts and any obstacles - nothing.

But the time has come for Zavenyagin too... A cleansing wave is underway—the liquidation of the liquidators. The giants of the socialist industry have been built, and after work the workplace must be cleaned. Footprints need to sweep. Therefore, the fate of Zavenyagin is decided. Among the delegates of the new XVIII Party Congress Zavenyagin got there because visibility is needed: it seems that not all the delegates of the last congress shot, look - one survived! He even smiles... But soon it will be his turn. will run out congress, it will die down ... It is clear that his name is not on the electoral lists ... Last time he was among candidates of the Central Committee, now Zavenyagin's name has been removed from the lists. Finished man. On the beaten path dear comrade Zavenyagin, forward and down... Into the cellars. They are waiting there.

Stalin decided the fate of Zavenyagin, gave the order, the Zavenyagin case was already in the archive, with thousands of deeds of exterminated enemies... But...

Kholovanov reported to Comrade Stalin that Zavenyagin at the party congress during a secret vote crossed out the name of Comrade Beria, the name of the chief Chekist, the name of his new chief.

This is incomprehensible. This needs to be dealt with...

5

The party congress is over. Thundered "Internationale" with modulations. After the International - a big lunch. Then - a big concert. And in the breaks - again the songs rattle, again the tambourine beats, again the girls in the pants are dancing. In a huge hall - a model of the Palace of Soviets. To the moment the victories of the World Revolution will lift the palace into the Moscow sky. This will be the tallest building peace - 500 meters. You look at the layout - you lift your head, but how it will look in kind! The victory of the World Revolution is near. The construction of the Palace has already begun. The pit is already being dug. Can in the Kremlin to admire the model, ascended upwards, or to leave the Kremlin and look into the foundation pit. This no longer a layout. This is real life.

Delegates sing, dance, rejoice - there will be war! The most important impression from the congress, deafening impression - we will fight! Very soon. That's why everyone is happy. That's why they admire delegates mock up, dancing around. Delegates in skullcaps, in cotton robes. And the Cossacks are in Circassians with silver laces. And metallurgists - in orders, like field marshals. And the miners rejoice dance. The miners at the congress, as is customary, with jackhammers on their right shoulders. A milkmaids - with buckets.

During the breaks there are interesting meetings. Notable people of the country exchange experience. Reindeer herders in furs talking with steelworkers. Lumberjacks - with plowmen. Writer Comrade Sholokhov He walks with a pen, during breaks he will sit down on a step and write a chapter of a book. It's just given to him: ten minutes and a new chapter. Without hesitation. And the poet Simonov, right on the go, poems about the war composes. About how the Red Army will storm Königsberg in the coming war:

Near Königsberg at dawn

We'll be hurt together...

He will write a poem, get distracted, and share his creative plans with the delegates. All this is called by a special term - "on the sidelines of the congress." This is the rubric in the newspapers. And those unforgettable meetings painted by journalists-writers, carried around the country. It turns out that our whole country is huge in joyful anticipation of the war gathered, crowded there, in the Kremlin Palace, the stories of the best listens to his people. Here is an interesting person - and delegates immediately around him in a herd. He history will tell. And here is another noble person - and around him a circle of listeners. Famous

polar pilot comrade Holovanov tells the delegates how he flew to the pole in the cold crackling. The director of the Norilsk Combine, Comrade Zavenyagin, tells how he polar frost mines the country nickel and copper. The delegates were surprised, they clapped their hands and another interesting person - to listen to the story of how he cut down on vast expanses and exported to the ports three million cubic meters of valuable timber, laid seven hundred kilometers of railway tracks in the tundra, built a dozen coal mines and now the ember is driving the Motherland.

From one storyteller, the group to another. Like fish in the underwater kingdom - r-r-time, and that's it instantly turned around in a sparkling silver flock. And next to Comrade Zavenyagin alone a young listener with a parachute badge on her chest lingered a little and, looking somewhere in side, smiling cheerfully at someone, ordered:

- Go to room 205.

The skydiver girl said the words quietly but clearly. Said like a battle order. She spoke with confidence in unconditional submission to herself. And went to another group to listen to how young enthusiasts, Komsomol volunteers, gold is mined in Kolyma.

Zavenyagin smiled. Smiled with the smile of a strong, self-confident person, a smile an optimistic polar explorer who is ready to give his Motherland everything he orders, who is ready at any cost build bridges and roads, factories and mines.

And my heart sank. He exhaled deeply, but restrained, so as not to attract attention: earlier I had to shoot. Until they called me into room 205. Zavenyagin was an engineer, he knew mathematics, loved calculations. Having become a candidate of the Central Committee at the last congress, he started statistics on his fellows - the same candidates as himself, jealously watched which of them would go for a promotion ...

Revenge failed. Of the 68 candidates of the Central Committee, only six went for promotion, two for their posts remained ... The rest were erased from the horizon, they no longer flicker. Based on a simple analysis, Zavenyagin established that he himself did not have long to wait for an invitation to go to a room with some number there ... That's why I decided to go into death myself, without waiting for invitations. Yes, I put it off somehow. And what opportunities there were! The director of Magnitogorsk always has two has a pistol - one on a belt, the other, small, in an inside pocket. How about the director metallurgical plant without pistols? And in Norilsk he was in the service, except for the security company and a fortified impregnable mansion on a rock, it was supposed to have a whole arsenal of personal weapons. How to mine nickel without weapons? What opportunities were beautiful to shoot! Now it's too late. At a party congress, not only is it not supposed to have a pistol in your pocket, but also your own fountain pen. Zavenyagin's life must end. But how?

The girl ordered to go to room 205. Zavenyagin does not know what awaits him in this room. But guesses. The smile on his face faded, he looked back at the Kremlin windows like a hunted beast squinted. It will not work: at each window - a pair of miners. With jackhammers on wide shoulders. They seem to laugh, they talk about their own, they share their work experience.

But the windows will not be allowed. And they guard the windows not from some abstract suicide, but from Zavenyagin. For they know that the order has been given to him. And from each window - joyfully smiles to Zavenyagin optimistic, they say, life is beautiful and amazing, and there is no need to jump out the window, dear comrade. We won't allow it. We do not allow.

The parachutist girl, who transmitted the order, listens to the story of the mustachioed cavalryman, how he In 1920, the Polish lords near Warsaw were beaten. The audience laughs. How not to laugh: everyone knows that the earth trembled from Zamoż to Warsaw when the pans fled from the Red Army. And the Red Army turned around and marched home in a victorious march. Why does she need Warsaw? Then we decided not to Warsaw take. But panama then gave! Ooh, they did! Age will not be forgotten. Probably, even now the gentlemen are trembling, like Zamostye remember!

Zavenyagin understands - it's only physically the girl is far from him, it seems she gave the order and moved away, but if you figure it out, she is next to him. And the story about the running lords is interesting to her, but only while Zavenyagin obeys the order, and if he doesn't, she will lose interest in the story and Will take care of Zavenyagin.

Zavenyagin knows: he is in the field of her interest. She did not let him out of her zone of attention ...

Zavenyagin is walking along the corridor. He hears that they are following him. He understands: they will not allow him to rush to the side. Knows: keep. There are three of them. Too bad I didn't get to shoot. Already on Magnitogorsk I understood: the worker-peasant the government will be forced to hide the price of a labor feat, to cut it. Therefore, leaders construction of the Magnitogorsk Combine, the authorities will be forced to exterminate. Just out security considerations. And the builders themselves were exterminated, liquidated. Zavenyagin is coming smiles, but swears to himself: why did you wait? What did you hope for? Why didn't he shoot himself in Norilsk? Why didn't you jump from the top floor of the Moskva Hotel this morning? Climbed to the very top, like admiring the view.

If you turn to the right, into the corridor, then from the talkative crowd of delegates you will fall into silence. True, not everyone will be allowed here. Passes are not asked here, but they will not allow you to pass. Two young men enthusiast of increased fatness, without explaining anything and without uttering unnecessary words, simply converge shoulder to shoulder in front of those who want to come here and look to the side. Our people understanding: it is impossible, therefore, it is impossible. Know there is a reason for that. And Zavenyagin reads the signs, and leaves, that the 205th room is in the same corridor. And went there...

The well-fed did not seem to notice him. Instructed. Three escorts follow Comrade Zavenyagin. They don't lag behind. They were also let through, without checking their documents, without saying a word.

Turn into this corridor - sort of like from the market square of Bukhara into an empty alley
dive. Nobody here. Red carpets of endless length. Black leather doors. And silence. Not
ringing silence, but deaf. Red carpet silence.

Room 205. Zavenyagin knocked.

- Sign in.

Permission did not sound from the room - one of the escorts allowed. opened
Zavenyagin door. Has entered. He expected to see everything. Just not this...

7

At the high post of the People's Commissar of Water Transport, Comrade Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov
discovered a strange feature - he suddenly stopped having enough money, despite the fact that
the position is paid, and for the rank. A long time ago he knew about the existence of money and strongly in them
needed, and then somehow more and more began to wean from money. Money was not required. All by itself
went out without them.

But they removed it from the NKVD, and the very next day I discovered that the money was still valid, that
You must have money with you, and an inexpressible lot.

He ran up the steps of the majestic granite entrance. Two sentry sergeants
crossed their bayonets in front of him, and a ruddy lieutenant of the state
security (with captain's insignia), looking past Nikolai Ivanovich and above him,
announced: "It is not ordered to let go."

Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov choked on saliva and air:

- I am the People's Commissar of Water Transport! I am a government member! I am the secretary of the Central Committee! I -
candidate member of the Politburo!

But the ruddy lieutenant, with a bored look, felt and weighed the chest of a reinforced concrete woman
striker on the neighboring facade, raising a reinforced concrete sickle into the sky.

And then Nikolai Ivanovich threw the last trump card:

"I am the General Commissar of State Security!" The lieutenant twitched at those words.

But the lieutenant controlled himself: not just anyone is kept in the protection of the Lubyanka.

This trump card did not help Yezhov either. What remains? Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov never humiliated himself to
to explain the purpose of your visit. Especially - a visit to the NKVD.

But what to do?

- Comrade lieutenant of state security, I remain the General Commissar
state security, therefore I am owed money for the title. I haven't been for five months
received a paycheck for the title. I just forgot to get it. But I need it, and I need it!

The ruddy lieutenant, from such an explanation, suddenly realized the full force of his powers and

the invincible power of the institution he was entrusted with guarding. He pulled himself up and in tone, not allowing the continuation of the conversation, repeated, cut off: "It is not ordered to let go!"

CHAPTER 6

1

The commander of the special group Shirmanov was twisted and tortured. News from Berlin. Lots of news. Agents in Berlin are working. It's hard to deal with messages. Because it's discordant. If we compare everything, it turns out that the sorcerer Rudolf Messer performed in Berlin. As always, with stunning success. He showed tricks, entertained the audience with answers to questions. him from the hall a question was raised...

Up to this point, the messages of the agents in general terms coincide. However, when you find out what question was asked to the sorcerer, then different intelligence networks and different agents gave thirty two different options. Messer (here all the messages are the same), without hesitation, answered the question ...

And then the confusion starts again. The agents reported a lot of answers ... And all are different. More than thirty possible variants of the question were reported, and agents collected more than a hundred. All Berlin is talking about the sorcerer, about his speech, about the question and about the answer. Problem: no matter who you talk to in Berlin, everyone saw the magician, everyone was at his performance, on the very same ... Everyone swears, swears that he personally heard ... And everyone tells his own. Here even the Gestapo forbade talking about the sorcerer. Rumors, of course, after such a ban all Berlin was filled to the brim - they only talk about the sorcerer. And they hung up posters with a large sum for a sorcerer's head. The amount is painfully attractive. So what are the people talk to the Germans, if not about the money that awaits that lucky man that the sorcerer is on the street recognizes...

So there are many messages. Go figure out which one is right...

However, the picture emerges clearly: there was some question from the audience and there was some answer sorcerer. I didn't like the answer ... I didn't like it.

Then again there is inconsistency undercover, different sources report their own. alone report, that the sorcerer was arrested right there in the circus ... This option seemed the most plausible, but was simply refuted - an agent named Chisel sent a small glossy poster:

"Rudolf Messer is an enemy of the people and the fatherland." If Messer didn't please something, if he blurted out the wrong thing, if he was immediately tied up, why release posters and paste over the city, filth it?

Consequently, he was not arrested immediately, he left, and for at least a few days he

were looking for.

Further, the information is again confused. It is reported that he himself surrendered and ended up in prison, and also report that he did not give up, but, after reading the posters, he decided to arrange a series of large concerts: breaks into Berlin prisons at night, kills dogs with his own hand, beats with a stick

guards, opens cells, releases criminals, but leaves the communists ...

Stop!.. Messer releases criminals from prisons. If this is true, then you can catch on. This may be that desired thread that leads to him.

At all times, secluded dachas have been the best place for training people of a special kind. Not just dachas, and dachas on the territory of army training grounds, hiding behind the signs "Stop! They're shooting!" Our country is large, there is a lot of land, endless polygons. Large polygons have their own advantages. Decided, for example, it will be said, to play a future war between Germany and France - no problem for you: marked France with pegs at the training ground, outlined Germany, side by side, you can also designate Denmark, Belgium and Holland with Luxembourg (in natural, of course, size), and drive tanks back and forth around the training ground, no one will interfere. At the same time not Let's exaggerate, let's not call our polygons endless. They have edges, of course. But no one knows exactly where.

So, there is a forest at the training ground. (Again, not endless, but with edges, only no one to those edges never got there.) The forest is pine. And if you go straight and straight, without turning, then in which then the moment (this is inevitable) you will run into a blank fence. Behind the fence - chain dogs. Behind the fence - neglected garden, lush lilac thickets. In lush thickets - a log house. In this house and preparing a Spanish group. Let's go in.

It is only outwardly a log house in a lilac flood that seems to Russians - carved architraves, a high porch, wooden roosters over the porch. Don't believe it - disguise. Here they are preparing a Spanish group, because inside everything is in the Spanish spirit - in a log wall Spanish a carnation is driven in, a sombrero is on a carnation. Not from Spain, from Mexico, but that's not the point. Main - recreate the Spanish atmosphere. Therefore, on the walls with buttons, postcards are pinned with views Madrid and Barcelona. (The internationalist fighters brought them on a special mission.) In the girls' rooms photographs of famous Spanish singers and bullfighters. In the large room - a portrait of a Spanish dictator General Franco. And in order not to be suspected of sympathy, the portrait is upside down. The dictators' legs are not marked in the portrait, so it's more accurate to say - not upside down, but down head. In a large room, some craftsman painted Spanish mills all over the wall, thin Don Quixote on a thin horse and fat Sancho on a fat donkey. And on the other wall is the slogan Republicans: "No pasaran!" - Fascism, they say, will not pass.

The whole Spanish group is here. Six girls. In the Spanish group a lecture on the Great French Revolution. It would be nice about Spanish, but in the absence of such one has to make do examples from the history of neighboring countries. The lecture is given by the Deputy Director of the Institute of World revolution Comrade Holovanov:

"There was a King Lui. Not the first Lui. Sixteenth. French comrades with this reconciled. They caught Lui and cut him off...

The attention of the listeners increased noticeably.

- ... head.

3

There is another place where Comrade Yezhov can get money - in his People's Commissariat, in People's Commissariat of Water Transport. Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov is driving the driver: he should be in time before closing financial department. And then without money you will be left on the weekend. Yezhov drives the driver, and he is ruddy invents punishment for the lieutenant. Wow, two months ago, this brat would have been caught! After all, I got only then the whole lieutenant was filled with subservience... And now he has grown bolder. Nothing!

For some reason, everything seems to Yezhov Nikolai Ivanovich that fate should smile at him, should he will return to the top ...

And the car in Moscow - quietly, gently. Comrade Yezhov did not think that it was so difficult to capital to ride. Most recently, the streets were blocked when the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Comrade Yezhov drove around Moscow, the policemen whistled, stretched out into the front ...

They don't stretch anymore. And they don't blow whistles. In the financial department of the People's Commissariat for Water transport queue. For money. Long. Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov believed that he owed the pay bring to the table. In an envelope. In blue. They don't bring. I sent a secretary - they do not give secretary. I went myself - I thought they would give me without a queue. I thought, as soon as it appears, the queue will shy away. Quite recently ... Well, well, he is no longer People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, from his post removed, but the title remains! And marshal's stars on the lapels of the collar! And another position remained - the People's Commissar of Water Transport! In capitalist language, a minister! And in in his own people's commissariat, in his own, that is, ministry, no one offers him money get. Like a conspiracy against him.

Nikolai Ivanovich stood at the end of the line, pursed his lips, - let it be a shame to all of you, your the minister is standing in line, he would have to solve state problems, and he is precious time here loses.

But no one was ashamed of the people's commissar at the end of the line, no one noticed his pursed lips. How, however, and his presence.

For a long, long time, the centipede queue at the window wriggled. Window - it's scary to put your hand in, gratings all around and a steel arch with a steel damper - look at that damper from the stoppers breaks off, chop off the palm.

For a long time Nikolai Ivanovich did not push through the queues. For a long time. Legs are aching. And the spine. He thought there are no more queues across the country, but you see, you made a mistake. Give me two hours and don't sin.

But the turn of Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov came up. He was the only one left in the lineup. on tiptoe got up and looked out the window.

In the window is a hefty aunt, sleek and plump, no matter what - Catherine the Great. Only without a crown. But on the other hand, the rings on the fingers - any Katerina to envy. And golden teeth.

- What do you want?

- Money.

- Come tomorrow. My work day is over.

No! Comrade Yezhov will not tolerate such treatment! The aunt is clearly not insignia understands. And he does not know who is the boss in the People's Commissariat for Water Transport.

Nikolai Ivanovich lowered his eyes and with a cold smile, as if reluctantly, as if confessing, quietly said:

— I am Yezhov.

“Ezho-o-ov ...” drawled the gold-toothed Katerina, either not believing, or frightened. — Ezho-ow!

She clung to the window, examined with curiosity and attention all the seams on the marshal's clothes of a little man ... And suddenly, with a roar, she lowered a steel door in front of his nose a damper, like a lattice on the gates of an impregnable castle:

- You are Yezhov! And I'm fucking Ivanova!

4

The executioner-cinematographer Uncle Vasya went down into the dark vault.

Makar, are you sleeping?

- I'm not sleeping, Uncle Vasya. You know, it took me three days to disassemble the tapes.

“I can't sleep,” Uncle Vasya grumbles. “I don't sleep,” but why is the muzzle striped like a tiger's?

- Uncle Vasya, you know, day and night ...

- Tiger, you are American, and there is no other name for you.

- Uncle Vasya...

- Okay, I know you. I, Makar, was ordered to look for a replacement. I'm going to rest. Whom will I choose will take my place. Choice. Difficult choice. I look at you all. I'm afraid you can.

So that they don't curse me later for such a choice ...

- Test me, Uncle Vasya, test me.

“I have been testing you for ten years. Your last exam...

- Listen, Uncle Vasya.

— Answer without hesitation... Uh-uh... Who would you like to ask? Wow, Bulanov.

- Bulanov Pavel Petrovich was the secretary of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, an enemy people, traitor and spy Yagoda. Bulanov took part in the exposure of Yagoda in the autumn of 1936 of the year. For this he was awarded the Order of Lenin by decree of November 28, 1936. But Bulanov himself turned out to be

enemy, he was arrested on March 12, 1937. He confessed to everything. Shot on March 13, 1938. Easily remember: one year and one day admitted ...

— And where is the box with the tape about the execution?

- Shelf 29, box 256-12.

Strong, Makar. More to check?

- Check, Uncle Vasya. Even though I sleep, I remember everything.

Do you remember all the tapes?

- That's it, Uncle Vasya. From Kronstadt Sabantuy and beyond.

- OK. I believe. I have known you for a long time, Makar. I scold you, but I admire you myself. You are my choice. I

I have already recommended you to Comrade Stalin. You instead of me now with Comrade Stalin

you will be in charge of cinematography. Congratulations. Don't lose your honor.

5

Anything Zavenyagin expected to see in room 205.

Just not this.

At first I didn't see anything. Darkness. Only he was overwhelmed by that feeling that suffocates and crushes a rat put into a cage by a boa constrictor. The rat does not yet see the boa constrictor. He's in the corner. Like a statue. And boa rat until needed. The boa constrictor can lie in a stupor for a long time. But the rat knows - here he is.

Zavenyagin did not see the danger. Felt. She tinkled in him with a cold piercing blow. She's in the corner, danger. And Zavenyagin's gaze was riveted to that corner, magnetized.

I took a closer look.

Where darkness deepens, Stalin sits silently in a deep armchair and looks at him.

— Hello, Comrade Zavenyagin.

Hello, Comrade Stalin.

- Sit down. How are you feeling?

“Very well, Comrade Stalin.

— How are things in Norilsk?

- We comply with the rules. In any frost. And we overfulfill.

- And how does the leadership of the NKVD treat you?

“Very well, Comrade Stalin.

- And how does the new people's commissar, Comrade Beria, treat you?

- Very good.

- What does it mean? 7

- In the Arctic, our biggest problem, Comrade Stalin, is the lack of workers.

Comrade Beria has recently taken over the post of head of the NKVD, but in this short time we are well

helped: the workforce is driven north in the right quantities.

- Comrade Zavenyagin, it's good that Comrade Beria is helping you and supporting you. But as

Do you personally, Comrade Zavenyagin, relate to Comrade Beria?

Zavenyagin looked into terrible eyes and saw in front of him not Stalin, but a boa constrictor, curled up into a ball before throwing. A boa constrictor curled up in an armchair, slowly squeezing his rings. Stalin's yellow eyes express nothing, just as snake eyes express nothing. Stalin just asked a question and waiting for an answer. Waits patiently like a snake that has no idea of time. Zavenyagin looks into his yellow cloudy eyes, in which there is no reflection, and understands that he has I don't have the strength to look away or blink. Now he understood why the rat in the zoo does not run from boa. The rat has no strength to turn away. To run, you need to turn your face in the other direction, but under with such a look all living things become numb. But even if the rat had the strength to turn away, then all the paws would not have taken it anyway. Surprisingly, the only way out of this situation is distraught with horror. the rat sees only in crawling towards those eyes. That's for such a movement in her paws there are forces. And there is no power to move in any other direction!

Zavenyagin felt like a rat. A large black skinned male rat. To not crawl towards the yellow eyes, Zavenyagin grabbed the arms of the chair, scratching the centuries-old oak and breaking his nails.

- How do you, Comrade Zavenyagin, feel about Comrade Beria? - sailed from somewhere incomprehensible question.

Zavenyagin suddenly felt with all his being that Stalin sees through him and reads him. thoughts. Yes! Stalin reads minds and knows everything. Zavenyagin knew that Stalin was confused with sorcerers, that learns from them. Zavenyagin heard that Stalin sees through everyone and reads everyone's mind. Just didn't believe it. Now it is clear: reads. Zavenyagin told everyone that he loved Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. Never he did not say a crooked word against Lavrenty Pavlovich. And only Stalin alone was able to read his real thoughts. Zavenyagin understands that he cannot deceive Stalin. Zavenyagin knows that the game finished. And there is no need for Zavenyagin to deceive Stalin. Zavenyagin has no strength to deceive.

- Comrade Stalin, you ask how I feel about Comrade Beria?

- That's what I'm asking.

- I hate him.

6

Life should be lived in such a way that no one pays attention to you. You have to live invisible.

So Uncle Vasya, the executioner-filmmaker, lived his life. In fact, they sometimes looked at him. More precisely, looked not at him, but through him. They looked, but did not see. All his friends, buddies, everyone with whom started, shot long ago. But Vasya was not noticed.

Uncle Vasya the executioner says goodbye to his profession. Bitterly. Bitter because his life is not

coincided with the most interesting stage in world history. Or rather, it didn't quite match. Up to forty years Uncle Vasya was in the peasant part. Managed. And then you have a war. Imperialist. For a long time they didn't take him. They took it in 1916. In the Life Guards Preobrazhensky. to the reserve battalion. In 1916 from there was nothing left of that Preobrazhensky for a long time - four trains were killed in the war ... Then the tsar renounced ... And away we go ... Then there was freedom and the defeat of the Winter Palace. Through the rest of his life Uncle Vasya he carried the secret: he was in the Winter Palace that night ... He didn't confess to anyone, he understood: to keep an answer for such one day it will. His friends, comrades, whose tongue turned out to be eloquent, disappeared one by one. And the picture of that night from year to year became more beautiful, more heroic. Neither Lenin nor Trotsky no revolution was conceived, and so they said - the October Revolution. Only ten years after coup, Comrade Stalin came up with a new name - the Great October Socialist revolution. Before that, the October coup was officially considered a conspiracy. And so that the participants affairs did not prevent the growing generation from correctly understanding the heroic past, the heroes of that night removed. One by one. No noise. It was necessary.

The fewer living witnesses, the easier it is for historians. And off we go. By the decade the storming of the Winter Palace was invented. Vasya watches Eisenstein's films, grins into his mustache: there was no such thing. He smirks, but respects Eisenstein: his brother, the cinematographer. With prickly tendencies. Uncle Vasya grins, keeps quiet. He who has not learned to be silent, who by plundering the Winter bragged, long ago put up to feed the worms. And Vasya is alive and well. After the coup, he settled down well - executioners were immediately needed, and he signed up. Only then did real life begin for him. It's a pity, the historical stage came late. Everything interesting is ahead, and Vasya is retired. Annoyance: before it fell to him to leave by the World Revolution itself. Ahead - Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Romania, then - Germany, France, Italy, Spain. How many executions ahead!

It's good for Makar - he's been in the shooting business since he was twenty, and this time he's thirty, he can shoot yes shoot, he shoots shootings, he enjoys. What is the fate of Makar: in ten years gained experience, filled his hand ... to the most interesting moment - to the liberation war. drops out Makar not only clean the earth from enemies, but also remove the cleansing. Shoot for the future generations of cleaners. It falls to Makar to complete Lenin's great work.

Comrade Lenin not only swept away evil spirits, but brought up cleansing ... Of all the arts cinema is the most important thing for us ... It was Comrade Lenin who ordered mass executions to be filmed, yes show the Red Army. For edification. With the first executions, the first filming. Who from Vasya's fellow performers realized that the highest achievements at the intersection of the arts are born? Nobody realized. And Vasya brought the art of the executioner to virtuoso perfection and the art he mastered cinematography and added it, and found his happiness at the junction of two arts. Not easy you need to shoot beautifully, but also shoot masterfully! Yes, do not stick out yourself. Don't brag. The heroic work of the executioner-filmmaker must still sparkle with inner modesty -

overflow...

During Kronstadt, Vasya was already a virtuoso. What is in one art, what is in another. executed Kronstadt sailors Comrade Tukhachevsky. Beautifully executed - under the ice they, bastards, lowered stuffed. Uncle Vasya followed Tukhachevsky after that: he filmed how Comrade Tukhachevsky in Tambov province drove hostages into the swamps. In the swamp. Like men and women in huts nailed up and burned entire villages. There were some very compelling films. It's a pity that everything later classified ... For the younger generation, they would now be like life-giving air!

There was a lot in just twenty years of work. Then there was Tukhachevsky himself. No boots. Cooked Tukhachevsky for execution, and Vasya unfolded his cinematic technique, then Tukhachevsky Vasya and identified: they say, is it you? No one ever recognized, but here ... Maybe he didn't recognize Vasya, and the film camera: you see, as in Kronstadt! Shooting with a movie! Vasya to him with a folded tripod hit the hump: you swim, bitch, into the crematorium, and swim past, don't catch others, don't drag along with you.

Almost then Vasya did not burn down. As an acquaintance of Tukhachevsky. But lucky: everyone who worked then for liquidation, they soon shot themselves, did not have time to report about Vasya ... They shot everyone, but Vasya left. Maybe there was a typo in the list, maybe something else ...

So he stayed alive. Oh, what a life Vasya has had! Shoot and shoot. Shoot and shoot. And demonstrate to Comrade Stalin himself.

All in the past. Vasya will no longer be allowed into the execution cellars. And without a favorite thing people unhappy. A retired chess player can do his favorite thing - play chess, a retired violinist - to chirp on the violin, a retired janitor - a revenge yard, a retired policeman can buy a whistle and whistle all day long. And what would you order a retired executioner to do?

Vasya would give everything to become young again. Like Makar. Who has everything ahead, everything life.

Everybody left. Quiet in the basement. Uncle Vasya is alone. He says goodbye to his fate. Like a blind man carefully touches his favorite concrete walls, battered by bullets. Late, oh, late he's in this thing came. It fell to him to shoot only 21 years. And Makar gets his whole life in this case. Well, let him be lucky. Let him be happy, as Uncle Vasya was happy at his post ...

Through all the execution years, Vasya carried his love for art, never revealing to anyone his secrets. Let them think that he was simply doing his duty to the working class. Let them think that he was simply put in this difficult but honorable position, and he just worked.

But he did not just work! He put his soul into it!

Tears roll down his flabby cheeks, and Vasya does not wipe them away. He knows that no one will see him here. Knows: here he has nothing to be ashamed of.

The most important thing in the special train of Comrade Beria is the armored platform. It so happened that the armored site is presented open. This is where you, my golden ones, got screwed over. armored platform

- This is a closed, fully armored armed carriage of an armored train. on four axes. From armored trains unhooked one armored car and attached it in front of the Beria locomotive.

The armament of the armored platform is one gun turret from the T-35 tank and two small turrets. IN gun turret - a 76 mm cannon and three machine guns, course, stern and anti-aircraft, and even one machine gun in each machine gun turret. In addition, three light machine guns: take-out or for shooting through embrasures. The crew of the armored platform - 12 people.

Behind the armored platform is a locomotive. Passenger cars behind the locomotive: the first one is for protection, the crew of the armored platform and two locomotive brigades, the second - for the radio station, radio operators, cryptographers and telegraphers. The third is for Comrade Beria. Fourth - restaurant and kitchen, the fifth - female, for service personnel. And at the very end - a platform for two cars cars and five motorcycles.

The commandant of the special train, State Security Captain Melor Kabalava, summoned head of the Kursk railway station and ordered to find a place for the train.

There are many requirements for such a parking lot: the station is huge, but a special train must stand somewhere in on the sidelines so as not to attract attention. It is better if between two lineups that go nowhere leave, who will cover the special train with themselves.

The head of the station turned out to be understanding, nodded, pointed out the place - in a dead end, on rusty rails, overgrown with weeds, between two dirty repair trains, in which some lazy people repairmen sleep soundly, like Moscow firefighters in 1812.

Between two repair trains, the captain of state security, comrade Kabalava, his special train and drove.

Repair trains are dirty and shabby. It's good for camouflage. By themselves, they are dirty, the sparkle of the Beria special train is obscured. Repair trains are almost extinct, repairmen are not that to sleepy, and more and more drunk. Drunk but quiet. They don't rage, they don't yell. They don't care there is no special train of Comrade Beria. Repairmen with their brains, splattered with fuel oil, even they are not able to figure out how important the train was placed between their trains.

Another advantage at that parking lot is the captain of state security, comrade Kabalava noted, but did not tell anyone. Here's the advantage. Stop Beria's special train for that parking lot - it is not known how long. Maybe a month, maybe two. Women in the fifth carriage the attendants languish. Only Comrade Kabalava knows: he is the head of the whole train, but to it is not recommended for the fifth car to approach him closely. And others too. Comrade Beria does not like when they approach the fifth carriage. Angry.

Therefore, the Caucasian man Comrade Kabalava immediately assessed the parking lot: the trains around were empty,

passenger and freight wagons. Almost no one around... And a fence. And a hole in the fence. Maybe sometimes to check the vigilance of the service of the guards, and to leave ... For an hour. Right behind the fence some back streets. And from there, from the back streets, through the hole, the girls into the repair trains to visit. Girls - for every taste: big and small, thick and thin, blondes, brunettes, brown-haired. And all of them, seeing the Caucasian man Kabalava, somehow in a special way smiled and seemed to melt. Girls go to sleepy-drunk repairmen, but Kabalava feels: beckon anyone with your finger ... Do repairmen have such mustaches as Kabalava has? In front of the mirror commander's compartment Kabalava scratches his mustache with a brush ...

Are there any oilers-couplers from the rusty Glavspetsremstroy-39 train, which is on the right, and from the peeling train "Glavspetsremstroy-12", which is on the left?

CHAPTER 7

1

Head of the Beria special train, State Security Captain Melor Kabalava

He slightly opened his right eye, groaned, and closed it again.

The first and only desire is to die.

Everything hurts: head, arms, legs; the swollen tongue burns and falls out of the dry, sour mouth; in mouth... it's better not to think about what's in your mouth... Thousands of axes are tearing his mortal nature from within. Turns out. If any doctor could imagine what is going on inside the Cabalava, then, on reflection, I would have made a diagnosis: acute inflammation of the inside. And in the head are Stakhanov's trolleys rumble.

He tried to raise his head, but the surge of nausea came with such force and fury that his heart stopped for a moment, and he was thrown back into the whirling, sparkling greyness.

For a few moments he lay staring at the ceiling, and then he remembered...

I remembered that I had left the Beria special train in the evening. Check external posts. Walk. Posts checked. I checked the approaches to the special train - there are whole schools of empty trains around. Then she flashed... Exactly the one I dreamed of - a short, fiery-red fat woman... Then she smiled dazzlingly ... Then she succumbed to persuasion and agreed to climb into the empty coach. Just like that, to talk.

And before that, the two of them climbed through a hole in the fence, wandered into a store ... Kabalava bought a bottle of Cahors... We returned to the station.

They climbed into the car... Kabalava spilled... She drank... He remembers that for sure. And he drank ... completely I drank a little, and the car turned upside down ...

Then something rumbled and rattled, then it fell down, and the train flew downhill, shaking onto the rails, then Malor Kabalava flew into the abyss ... or not - first he flew into the abyss, and then the train tumbled, rushed into the sky, beat the roof against the moon, knocked it out of the sky, and it split crumbled into sparkling pieces ... Then there was a failure .. No, at first there was a failure, then someone stood over him and terribly laughed, then the devils chased after him, then something flashed, behind this - the light faded...

2

- Where I am?

— Pan is in a good place.

Kabalava opened one eye. A monstrous pain pierced his head. Better close.

- Where I am?

I decided not to open my eyes yet, but to look through my eyelashes. From the orange turbidity sailed face and swam away again. For some reason, Kabalava decided that in front of him was a Polish colonel. Why Polish, he did not know. I just made up my mind and that's it. Probably, the mustache is exactly the same as Pilsudski's on cartoons.

- Who are you?

"Pan doesn't need to get excited.

"Did you set up a bitch for me yesterday?"

- Let the sir not swear.

"Did you poison me yesterday?" I'll shoot you bitch!

"Pan need not worry. The sir doesn't have a gun.

Kabalava slapped his side—an empty holster. Rushed to get up. Fell.

- I say: let the sir calm down. And don't be in a hurry to leave. Pan has no pocket party card and NKVD identity card.

- Where are they?!

- Party card sir drank. And he sold the NKVD certificate to Polish intelligence.

"Grrrr," growls Kabalava.

- The sir has a choice. Pan Kabalava can report to Pan Beria that he drank all night with whores and told the secrets of Pan Beria ...

- Didn't say anything!

- He told. Just forgot. He told how many girls Pan Beria had in the fifth car, how name and how Pan Beria studies Lenin with them ... Favorite work - "Materialism and empirio-criticism.

"Uuuuuuuuh," howls Kabalava.

- Pan Kabalava can also turn to the police and tell that he was here yesterday about Pan Stalin said...

- Uuuuuu...

"Now go, Pan Kabalava. If pan wants to stay alive, let him come tomorrow, I'll pan I'll give you photographs, as a keepsake ... It's interesting that the sir spent time ... Let the sir come tomorrow, maybe we'll find a common language, maybe a Pan party card will be found.

- Give me the gun. How can I get back without a gun?

"Let sir take the gun. He's just out of ammo. And it's not a gun. It's a gun policeman killed in Georgia.

"I won't take someone else's, from the dead."

- Then let the sir walk with an empty holster. Until the subordinate pans pay attention. Let

pan Kabalava chooses. The sir can walk around without a gun, or, for now, with someone else's. As the sir likes.

If the gentleman behaves well, we'll see - maybe we'll find a gentleman's pistol under the wagons...

Maybe in some dustbin the NKVD panorama certificate will be found.

- Can not go. My deputy will report that I was gone all night.

- Won't report. Go.

3

Day and night in the work of Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. Next to the office they equipped him a rest room: carpets were laid, an ottoman was put up, pine shields on the windows were curtained with velvet.

He is there for a few minutes - to distract himself from business. And back to business.

- Ale. Comrade Stalin. Comrade Stalin, we planned to appoint comrade Akazis.

- Yes, we have agreed with you, Lavrenty.

- Comrade Stalin, he cannot be appointed as my deputy.

Why, Lawrence?

- He jumped out the window.

"But can't the one who jumps through the windows be appointed as your deputy?"

"He's from the top floor, Comrade Stalin.

- You see, Lavrenty, how people are afraid of you, they jump out the windows from you. And no one has me fears. No one jumps out of the windows from me.

- Comrade Stalin, so who will we appoint as my deputy?

- Lavrenty, who is the People's Commissar of the NKVD?

"I am Comrade Stalin.

- So choose your own deputy, you have to work with him, not me. Because it's your choice.

Choose a candidate yourself, we will consult with our comrades here, and we will approve your choice.

— Rapava.

— Rapava? Avksenty Narikievich? Georgian NKVD? A very good person. Outstanding Human. But listen, Lavrenty, I am a Georgian, you are a Georgian, Rapava is a Georgian. What about us Russians think? They will say: only Georgians dug in in the Kremlin and in the Lubyanka. Come on Russian.

— Kubatkin.

— Pyotr Nikolaevich? Moscow NKVD? What a good candidate. Amazing person. But drunkard...

— Nikishev.

— Ivan Fyodorovich? Head of Dalstroy? I know him, Lavrenty. Good man. Here it is we need. I fully support his candidacy.

- Comrade Stalin, tomorrow I will send all the materials to Nikishev.

— Well... But I don't know if my comrades will support me. Everyone knows that Nikishev is a womanizer.

Why do you need a womanizer as a deputy? Are there enough womanizers in the Lubyanka even without him? Come on another.

- Who else?

- What, you already have no friends in the NKVD?

- Maybe, Comrade Stalin, appoint Zavenyagin?

— What are you talking about, Lavrenty? Appoint Zavenyagin as your deputy? What

Zavenyagin? Who is Zavenyagin?

- Zavenyagin, Comrade Stalin, commanded Magnitogorsk.

- No, Lavrenty, you are confusing, Klishevich commanded Magnitogorsk.

- Comrade Stalin, Klishevich commanded the camps, and Zavenyagin the construction. Klishevich

shot, and now Zavenyagin is in command of Norilsk.

— Ah, I remembered. Bald like that.

- Yes. Bald.

— No, Lawrence. Zavenyagin, though bald, is still young.

- Comrade Stalin, Zavenyagin coped with Magnitogorsk, he copes with Norilsk, maybe he

such a position will pull?

- Do you vouch for him?

"I promise, Comrade Stalin.

- All right, if you insist, I will put the question to the Politburo, maybe, comrades

agree to appoint Zavenyagin as your deputy.

4

Hello, Comrade Stalin.

- What is your name?

— Makar.

- Now you will be my special cinema mechanic?

"That's right, Comrade Stalin.

There is only one spectator in a small cinema hall. Comrade Stalin. New personal executioner cinematographer Makar is rattling boxes in the movie booth. Light out. No credits or intros film: Comrade Bukharin among Komsomol members. Comrade Bukharin among the Red Army. Comrade Bukharin is a friend of the pioneers. Comrade Bukharin at the great construction site of communism, at the LBC - Belomorsko Baltic channel. And in the background, some people in gray happily roll cars. And all around portraits of Comrade Bukharin. Thousands of portraits. Books by Comrade Bukharin. Comrade personality cult Bukharin. The arrest of citizen Bukharin. The process of an enemy of the people, a traitor, an agent of international

capitalism and three foreign intelligence agencies, the rogue Bukharin. The execution of the scoundrel Bukharin. Then - the execution of the commander of the first rank Frinovsky and the commissioner of the state the security of the first rank of Zakovsky, who in a sabotage way prepared and carried out Bukharin's trial.

Comrade Stalin likes to watch every film many times. But today at Comrade Stalin's not in the mood.

— Comrade Makar, enough about that. Let's do something fun.

5

They served the sorcerer for lunch ... I am talking about lunch because I don't know another name for a plentiful grub at half past five in the morning. You can't call it lunch. That's your business. But if it's not lunch, then no breakfast: early, yes and plenty for breakfast. Let's agree: it's not the name that matters, but the fact that the grub the sorcerer was given a truly plentiful one. First of all, bean soup. The Germans need their due give away - they know how to make soups from beans and peas. If they want. And if they want, they create soups with that frenzied inspiration with which Mozart or Beethoven wrote their operas and symphonies. That night, inspiration descended on the prison cook Hans. not only descended, but rushed by a hungry Roman she-wolf, and while the sorcerer was being rubbed and hovered, a frenzied Hans created a soup like never before made. I will say more - he will never do such a thing succeeded. For the rest of his life, Hans walked and sighed: that was the night! Inspiration my brothers not everyone is attacked and not every night.

In general, the soup was served to the sorcerer even better than those soups that Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria they are cooked in a special train at the Kursk railway station and delivered to the Lubyanka under escort. Long time to argue however, I will not, because Lavrenty Pavlovich did not invite me to visit, and I, frankly, I have not tried Beria's soup. I'm not to judge. Because I don't know whose cook would be at the soup competition won. I only know that Hans, a pot-bellied German, could safely be exhibited at any international culinary competition. Wouldn't shame.

Hans lifted the lid of the saucepan - the sorcerer's head began to spin. And Hans (to the waiter in this in fact, not trusting) he himself pours the sorcerer with a silver ladle. And not in the plates of the good Germans serve soup, and in deep clay bowls, painted with fantastic, clearly unearthly flowers and surreal roosters with red-green-blue tails. They are in soup, bastards, in oil toasted crackers crumble. I won't say that this bread replaces, but on German breadlessness and crackers for bread go. To whet the appetite, the Germans are supposed to drink a little, and then add as needed.

Our sorcerer does not need to whet his appetite: he would now be given half a meter of German smoked sausages, hardness impenetrable, so he had her from hunger at the moment to the very rope

would chew. But according to German custom, it's still supposed to whet the appetite, and for that they have schnapps is registered. They understand Hans and Fritz in schnapps more than ours. This must be recognized, and with this not we will argue. The head of the prison consumed apple schnapps. Such a sorcerer was served. In ice. The stack is quite small, in an ice crust. But on the other hand, beer is served for a German dinner in three liter mug. Cold. Foam over the edge. The mug gets cold in the heat. small-small droplets in a circle. Droplets swell on the mug sides, as if in a cloud of snow and thunder, and now one drop that ripened the fastest did not stay on the glass, fell off, slid and rolled along, dragging everyone on the way, paving a path in which glitters shimmers cold with frost crystal-fluid amber.

If it were my will, I would introduce a three-liter beer mug into the system of international consumption standards. I will not insist that the introduction of three-liter beer mugs will remove all the problems of mankind at once, but, of course, half of the problems will disappear.

The sorcerer took a sip, and a lot of problems, his rebellious soul oppressing and crushing, not that to move away, but somehow softened, smoothed out. I must emphasize here that sorcerers also people, they have no less problems than we have. They have more problems. The sorcerer sees more than us, notices more than ours and understands more, therefore the life of a sorcerer is fuller and wider, because the passions are sharper than ours, the happiness of the sorcerer is immeasurable, but his suffering is also harder, more painful and deeper. Therefore, they do not live long, sorcerers. And them from the heights (or from the depths) in which the soul lives, too, sometimes it is necessary to return to our sinful earth. They need to humble their spirit and calm down. That is why the sorcerer drinks from a three-liter mug, the spirit humbles ...

And at the door the waiter, a courtier of six communists, fusses. After inspirational soup - german schnitzel...

Do you know what a real German schnitzel is? I mean the real one. I would describe it to you, but I'm afraid it won't work. Talent is not enough. Yes, and not about the merits of schnitzel here speech. It's about something else: did the hungry sorcerer know that you can't get enough? That is the question.

I know the answer to this question. I inform you: the hungry sorcerer knew that it was impossible to get enough. However...

7

There is a masquerade in the apartment of Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov. However, before talking about masquerade, it is necessary to tell about the apartment itself, it is necessary to explain what is meant in this case. Yezhov's apartment - in an old house, in a house of the time when they knew how to build good apartments, large and bright, with a front door and black. There are many rooms, corridors in the apartment, there are more the reception hall is also a sports hall, and to make it even more spacious, they cut through the wall and arranged

passage to the next apartment, and from it - to another one. And it turned out that the apartment has more than one front door entrance, but several (I won't lie how many exactly - I don't know), and back entrances at least more than one. For the sake of safety, something was boarded up, something was laid with bricks. And it turned out apartment - drive round dances or go around on a bicycle in the morning.

How many rooms turned out, only cleaning ladies know. No one else counted those rooms.

Nikolai Ivanovich also has an apartment in the Kremlin, but he does not arrange masquerades there. In the Kremlin somehow awkward. There are still cottages. In Pushkino, on Akulova Gora. In Yalta. In Kommunarka. But there you can't gather a lot of people - the guests have to travel far. Because Yezhov's carnivals-masquerades - in mostly in an apartment on Kiselny. Here every evening is fun: the music is booming, colorful lanterns flicker, couples swirl. Everyone dresses up in what they like: hussars and nuns, robbers and gypsies, convicts in chains and broken street girls, sailors and schoolgirls ...

Funny. Yezhov's carnivals are generally famous for some kind of feverish fun. blossomed they in two unforgettable years - in 1937 and 1938. These two years are a great turning point at the front fight against spies and pests. They shot people before, and in much larger quantities, but in In 1937, the life-giving whirlwind of purification finally burst into the very pinnacles of power, almost completely littered with enemy agents. And here it was impossible to shoot just like that, no matter who hit, without investigation, here I had to start a case for each spy, in addition, this case sometimes had to be investigate - unravel. But there are different conspiracies: to unravel one sometimes fifteen minutes are enough, but sometimes a whole working day is not enough to unravel another. If the costs working time to unravel all the conspiracies together, then it turned out that the apparatus The NKVD had to spend millions of hours of working time. Here is a kind word addressed to the Yezhovs The investigators must be told: no one was embarrassed by the enormity of the task. Not one flinched. None scared. All worked like convicts. To facilitate shock work, even with

Wheelbarrows of the Belomorkanal to request that the Lefortovo and Lubyanka investigators do not have folders with cases they dragged and tore themselves in their hands, and to roll piles of investigative cases on wheelbarrows, like drummers on canal construction. Comrade Yezhov used to go along the Lefortovo corridor, and towards investigators with a Stakhanov march, a joyful step with a song of a cheerful wheelbarrow roll an endless succession. During these two years, monstrous workloads fell on the investigative apparatus of the NKVD. Investigators for weeks and months they did not leave their offices, collapsed on their feet, fell asleep behind the workers tables, forgot about the family, about loved ones. And Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov did everything to alleviate the difficult the fate of his subordinates: in the entire multimillion-dollar apparatus of the NKVD, he tripled the pay, built thousands of apartments (as they were called - "Yezhov's houses"), opened one and a half hundred new sanatoriums and resorts in addition to the existing ones - all the Black Sea coasts switched to the improvement of the information-investigative apparatus of the NKVD. Rezko Nikolai Ivanovich increased Chekist rations, introduced a "Yezhov surcharge" for harmful production,

organized the delivery of chocolate, pineapples, German sausage, French pate to everyone Chekist directly to the house, and for a special circle of Moscow and visiting Chekists in their apartments and dachas seven times a week arranged and continues to arrange carnivals-masquerades.

Yezhov's carnivals - in the manner of English clubs: no ranks, no subordination, everyone is equal. Also, it's only men. Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov established a strict order and himself - an example to follow: if there is no subordination, then he himself is not the first among equals, but equal among equals. At his carnival-masquerades, Nikolai Ivanovich allows the most free self-treatment. He does not want to be called at home by his rank, by his position, and even by name. There is a carnival commotion, and therefore here his name is in the French manner - Nicole.

CHAPTER 8

1

Once again the sorcerer ordered himself: "Don't sleep!" He blotted his lips with a napkin. demanded head of the prison

- Can you drive a car?

- I can.

- Went.

- Where? - The head of the prison asked this question in the same tone as his driver asks.

- Take me to the funniest neighborhoods. Are there any in Berlin?

— There are some.

2

"Give me something fun!" So: do not say that the work of the executioner cinematographer is a simple matter. No way! "Give me some fun!" Go think: the shelves are crammed with boxes of tapes... Cheerful... Makar knows the content of all the tapes, the course of all processes over enemies remembers. Say the name - he instantly removes the necessary tape from the shelf ... And there are so many enemies shot down. From each enemy - a thread to a dozen others, and from each from others - again threads ... Enemy conspiracies branched out and intertwined with fantastic patterns. Makar remembers who was connected with whom, remembers who shot whom, and those who shoot they themselves were in conspiracies, they themselves were connected with someone. Name Makar any enemy, he will immediately the device turns on, the film is played, and he himself knows what order may follow after this ...

If the order is accurate, Makar will immediately execute it, but how to fulfill the order is vague. funny? What is fun? Everyone has their own concept of fun. Uncle Vasya, retired gone, the tastes of the viewer for many years studied. He would ... But Makar is not a blunder either. Slipped labels with a glance, without even reading the names, he snatched out the tape that he considered appropriate to the order, stuck his head out of the cinema booth door:

- Comrade Stalin, here is a tape about how a girl is shot ...

The apparatus crackles, the tape winds. Comrade Stalin is watching a funny movie ... In execution spring is raging in the forest. Such a shameless spring. Slutty... Beat the girl the way we know how, on Wet sand was thrown, and the head of the execution party, Kholovanov, poked her in the face with his boot:

- Kiss.

Comrade Stalin laughed all the time. And then shut up. Comrade Stalin is worried. No one is allowed to see

Stalinist unrest: an empty hall, darkness. Turned:

- Again please.

Comrade Stalin became completely serious. He ordered the film to be played again about a girl. And further once. I would like to share. But with whom?

— Comrade Makar...

— Listen, Comrade Stalin.

- Have you seen?

I saw it, Comrade Stalin.

- What a pity that this film, you know, I can not show anyone. What a pity. Look here

Comrade Makar, he tells her to kiss the boot, but she, you understand, does not kiss. She is shot, she they kill, but she, you understand, does not kiss the boots. What a girl, you know, stubborn.

3

The car stopped in an alley. In the dark In white snow. The sorcerer came out and slammed the door. He turned to the head of the prison, ordered:

"Now forget everything.

- Forget what? The boss didn't understand.

- All.

The wizard got out of the car. Went through the snow. Boots are dry. New ones. They creak. Two reasons creaking: firstly, new ones, and secondly, in the snow. Supervisory boots. Do not dry your happened. That's why they brought it from the warehouse. With the very smell with which new shoes come. AND new socks were given. Thick, wool. The sorcerer is now a scientist - boots are two sizes larger I took it so that thick socks do not crush the leg. And his own pants, dried in the dryer prison, communist ironed. Already hot. And a little bit, just a little bit damp. AND this light hot dampness of the pants pours joy into the sorcerer. As he remembers the cold, pood, water-soaked pants, so much fun. And he has a new shirt on. New and fresh. shaved throat, fragrant Jasmine cologne, the sorcerer barely touches the satin collar. coat too dried. True, not completely dry. Do not dry in a short time. But still, almost dry. The head of the prison also gave him a scarf as parting. For memory. Red and thick. The sorcerer remembered the head of the prison, turned around.

He stands in a dark alley. Standing, looking ahead. Nearby is a black Mercedes. WITH open door.

The head of the prison is not going anywhere.

He forgot where to go. He forgot that he was the head of the prison. He forgot what was in his hands he has car keys. He forgot that the car was next to him.

He forgot everything.

4

A sorcerer walks through the snow, creaking with his soles. Goes, does not hypnotize anyone. To hell with it, let find out. It is joyful in the soul, therefore it does not protect itself with an invisible barrier, behind which it is not they will see, behind which they will not recognize him. We must tell the truth: he no longer has the strength to block himself protect. Its magical powers are like a powerful battery: energy can be spent in any quantities, but immediately it is necessary to replenish and accumulate it. But it turned out that our sorcerer he used up his magical power in the Berlin circus, but there were no conditions to replenish it. How he ran away from the circus without this energy - he himself cannot understand, he himself is surprised. Just left for luck, he left on impudence, on the dumbfounded of the crowd and the police.

Then, after two days and two nights of wandering, I finally lost all my energy. He level I raised and restored quite a bit in the funnel while I was sleeping, but in prison I squandered everything again. I gave the last impulse to the head of the prison: forget everything.

Now the sorcerer is again unarmed and defenseless, like a viper, all his poison is precious in spent intensive biting ... She, gyurze, squandered the poison, it's supposed to hide, go to stones, sleep off, save new poison. Without poison, the gyurza is not only defenseless, but also inactive, her fatigue torments, she freezes. So our sorcerer also needs rest, he needs a strong, long and deep sleep. Sleep without dreams. But he does not have the strength to order himself to sleep without dreams. And nowhere him to sleep. Washed him in prison, shaved, dried, brushed, ironed, fed and got him drunk... That's why he feels really bad. Bending him and leading him. Brings him to sleep, as if in a swoon, as in death.

And from the dark doorway, the most important street beauty of Berlin whispers and sings to him:

"Sorcerer, is that you?" Wizard, come to me, I will warm you.

Obediently the sorcerer behind the beauty - in the gateway. In a narrow gap behind the coal box. Into the dark break. Into the black corridor In a filthy courtyard between four deaf five-story walls. In the iron door of a transformer box with a skull and crossbones. In a narrow hole under the hot buzzing transformer. Now - down between the bare cables of the voltage from which the going the sorcerer's hair stands on end, and the beauty has her hair in different directions, like a mermaid or drowned women. Further - along the brackets down, down and down. To warmth. From the depths of the earth, from the depths of the thermal the flow rises: maybe the underground heating main is nearby, maybe the ventilation of the metro station.

She pushed the door...

5

Zavenyagin is finished. Everyone knows this. Zavenyagin did not allow free treatment with him, but who asks him? That's why everyone goes to him easily: how, they say, brother Zavenyagin, are things going? And by

his neck. Kind of sweet, kind of friendly. But in friendly gestures, undisguised bile
contempt: falling down? Here you go, bitch! Rather, release the high Norilsk post!

Zavenyagin was a Central Committee candidate, now his name is not on the electoral lists. Because
human gloating sticks out and does not hide in any way.

- Hey, Zavenyagin, but you're not on the list! - Everyone tells him this with some kind of joy.
discoverer. After all, it may turn out that Zavenyagin himself does not yet know about this, so he
convey:

- You are not on the list, Zavenyagin!

And all sorts of people take him for the button of his jacket:

- It appears so, Zavenyagin. Mark my words: you won't be sitting in Norilsk for long. Will be removed
you. How to drink. You can't sit still in Norilsk. I can smell the situation.

- And I have already been removed from Norilsk.

- How was it filmed? Already filmed? When was it taken down?

- Five minutes ago.

- So why are you silent? Pyotr Ivanovich, run here. Heard? They removed Zavenyagin from Norilsk.

What did I tell you?

"I understood this even without you. Is it hard to imagine? What a post. Norilsk is not a pound of raisins.

One word: Norilsk! There is responsibility ... Not everyone can handle it ...

- Zavenyagin, where are you going now?

- Deputy...

- Deputy to whom? Senior deputy junior govnovovoz?

- No. Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria

deputy...

"Avraamiy Pavlovich... you are our dear friend, congratulations!" Congratulations from the bottom of my heart! I'm
always knew... a big ship... so to speak... a big voyage... I already feel the situation...

And through the huge hall, through the crowd of delegates, like ripples in water: Abraham Palych was promoted! Yes
which! Lavrenty Palych himself as a deputy! Here is the duet! Golden couple. Tandem. After all, how
it turns out: Comrade Beria went to the Kremlin for half an hour, to Comrade Stalin for a report, and at that
time combat post, consider unattended. That's where the weakness was. That's what the enemies take advantage of
could! And now ... now the enemies will not burn out! Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria can calmly leave,
after all, instead of him - Zavenyagin! You won't find a better place for this post! And Comrade Stalin, eh! Millions
people in his submission, and you need to choose only one. And he did choose! Exactly the one who
this post directly and created!

Movement in the hall. On the sidelines, that is. The movement that we are shown at school when
they say about magnetism: they scattered a handful of steel filings on the table, brought a small magnet -

r-r-time! And all the sawdust on the magnet turned around. The same phenomenon is possible for schoolchildren demonstrate on another example: a new deputy of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Comrade Zavenyagin Avraamiy Pavlovich - r-r-time! And at once thousands comrades turned to him. And they pulled. And they hurried:

- Avraamiy Palych, what a joy!

6

New in the Spanish group. She entered somehow imperceptibly, and at first they did not pay attention to her. attention. And then a commotion: new, new!

This is how we are arranged: to those who are new among us, we give a lot of polite friendly attention, we help him, we explain to him the incomprehensible. Behind this is a very simple psychological circumstance: look, we are talking to a newcomer, you don't know anything, you don't know anything you don't understand, but we all know, we all understand.

There are no names in special groups. Everything here is under undercover pseudonyms. There are six girls in the group: Gyurza, Infection, Inkblot, Icicle, Cholera, Splinter.

And one spare.

The Spanish group is a special selection. Gyurza has the Order of the Red Banner. At the Infection and the Blot - by the Order of the Red Star. Icicle and Cholera have medals "For Courage". At Zanoza - "For combat merit." Girls proudly wear medals. Comrade Stalin does not throw orders in vain. Too bad no one sees them here. In orders. In addition to medals, everyone also has badges: "GTO", "Voroshilovsky shooter", parachutes with three-digit golden overhead numbers.

Girls know: soon under deep cover. Therefore, you will have to remove orders, medals, badges. Maybe forever. And the new one has no orders, no medals. And she has only one badge - a parachute without a digit, the number of hops of the signifier. This is how beginners do: they tear off a pendant on which the number of jumps is knocked out, like the pendant itself came off-from-spinning-lost to no one knew if they had two jumps or only one. True, such badges are worn by the best masters: just a parachute with a torn pendant. Masters are already past the age when it is important to remember and to everyone you meet, opening your chest, showing whether you have 600 jumps or 700. Masters consider themselves just skydivers, they know that they have no equal anyway. But for the new one clearly does not apply. She does not pull on a parachute master. It just doesn't look right. Not the same set. You can see it right away: a spare. She is the smallest in height and did not come out with a body. And she doesn't have that kind of joyfully victorious, which is inherent in the main composition.

True, the feeling of triumphant superiority is not accepted in the Spanish group demonstrate: they say, we are skydivers with hundreds of jumps, and you are a beginner; they say we have orders medals, but you don't have them. Girls understand: if the new girl got into a special group, then they will

her medals, and maybe orders. True, she is not in the main composition. She's just a spare. She missed the bulk of the training program. For the main composition, she still does not keep up. That's why she needs help.

“Listen, new girl, we have already been taken to the hall of mirrors and will be taken again soon. We to you Let's talk about the mirror room. And we ourselves, without an order, decided to speak in our free time only in Spanish. What do you think about that? Do you approve?

The newcomer was embarrassed, lowered her eyes:

— Si, estar bien*

7

Training point of the Spanish group for six candidates - each room is separate. A brand new, spare, no room fell out. Therefore, an extra bed was placed in the hallway. AND It's OK. All are here. There are no strangers. Therefore, in a separate room or in a common corridor - is there a big difference? Next to the bed is a nightstand. There is a nail in the wall. Toothbrush - in the nightstand. Overcoat - on a nail. Soldier's duffel bag - under the bed. And on the wall by the bed she buttons pinned a portrait of Comrade Stalin. Smiled at something. She covered her head. And fell asleep. To her dreamed of a white fluffy dog with blue eyes.

* Yes, it suits. (Spanish)

CHAPTER 9

1

Ezhov's merriment took off the brakes. Fun is outrageous. No longer nervous fun - hysterical.

The nuns laugh with animal laughter. Drink. They kiss. They swear. They cry. And they drink again.

The circle is melting. Therefore, every evening about one thing: who was taken today? Who will be taken today? ABOUT tomorrow is not accepted. And it is not accepted to think. You have to live until tomorrow.

Why are the Yezhovites gathering here? Because they are used to it. When Nikolai Ivanovich was People's Commissar internal affairs, when the shootings were on the conveyor belt, center Yezhovites, lovers of male society, gathered here to relax. Let's just say it's a stressful job. No morphine worked out. And here, at Nikolai Ivanovich's, at masquerades, morphine was served as a treat - as cognac is served like champagne.

Yezhov's power is over. Some Yezhovites shied away. Not burned out - their shoals catch and shoot. And others still flock to Yezhov for a light every evening. im like sheep in the herd, not so scary. Home is scarier. Brave Yezhovites have long been in the Lubyanka windows jumped out. The rest are gathering here.

- Who is next?

- Zavenyagin, of course. Everything tends to this.

- No, brother, Zavenyagin jumped off our tram and turned into a Beria.

"They won't give him a big position anyway. They will send to Siberia in a seedy camp command,

To hell with her position. I am ready now even as the head of the camp, if only the party would not suspected of sabotage. Well, you were wrong about Zavenyagin. Zavenyagin the most center became a Beria member - the head of the Gulag and Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria as a deputy. Zavenyagin is now mercilessly exterminating his former comrades. Broke off the chain. New demonstrates loyalty to the owner.

2

Just look who I brought!

The black tunnel responded with a roar of delight. And the whole underground world of Berlin - to meet the sorcerer. Everything is assembled here. Even those who, a couple of hours ago, played cards on prison bunk beds, who with a forbidden carnation on the wall of the wand he scratched whom the sorcerer with his will, his order, his Grace freed and rescued from prison. They, the liberated, have a special delight. They still

They didn't have time to change clothes, and they rejoice here, striped, like knights in tiger skins. squeezed sorcerer, shake hands, knock on the shoulders, hug. And hundreds of hands draw him to the very place of honor. AND the plugs slammed into the concrete vault, into the darkness. And champagne - a river, a waterfall, a cascade with rifts.

Good for the dungeon. Warm. Spacious. Droplets sometimes fall from the ceiling. But droplets freedom is not an obstacle. The main thing is that there is no way for outsiders to go here. Deep. Whether the adit "Metrostroy" abandoned, or a bunker from the Great War. And the exits from here are into the ventilation systems. metro, into the main tunnels of water supply and sewerage, and the devil knows where. rust smells like mold. And it also smells of beer, smells of schnapps, smoked sausage. And champagne. Fun here, sort of like at a masquerade at Yezhov Nikolai Ivanovich. The only difference is that in the dungeon Berlin multi-colored lights do not flicker. And one more thing: here, in the dungeon, there are no gender restrictions. female. There is no gender segregation. There is no ban on the presence of the best specimens beautiful half of the human race. Therefore, unlike Yezhov's masquerades, there is no need whoever gets dressed up as countesses and flower girls.

The sorcerer did not think that there were so many women here, in the dungeon. First thought: why so many? Second: persevere.

3

The sorcerer passed out. His eyes still saw the wild merriment, his ears still heard the screams striped and their multi-colored girlfriends, someone's warm hands were still hugging his neck, but in front of him a huge whistling, growling, roaring circus was already floating ... The sorcerer majestically lowers his hand, and together silence falls with it, enveloping everything and conquering everyone ... The last question of the program. thousands hands The sorcerer led the audience to the brink of insanity. It seems that between him and the audience they slip, sagging, monstrous force discharges, as between earth and sky, illuminating everything around and crushing everything, what gets in the way... So, the last issue of the program, the last question in the last issue...

The question has already been asked, and the answer will plunge the circus into a frenetic, seething and seething delight... But...

4

If you don't know how to work with a large audience, I will teach you. Let's remember the main thing: easily. You have to want, then everything will work out.

Let's start with the simplest. And what is the easiest? To answer questions from the public, that's what.

It is easy to answer questions because magical power must not be spent on everyone at once, but just for one.

The main thing is to sort the questions. The audience should be warmed up on the easiest questions. A in the end, leave the winning, complex, serious questions. And the very last question

should be such that the answer to it plunged the audience into delight. That's the whole secret.

Like everything in life, it's so simple.

So let's go to the arena. While the applause is thundering, while the public is giving out an advance, let's figure it out who will ask what question. There are no problems here. It is clear to you who wants to ask what question.

Questions written on faces. The one with the most winning question, we mark with our eyes, remember, stake it out and save it for later, for dessert.

Now let's choose five people in the crowd who are willing to ask difficult questions. These questions the most important will be preceded. Let them be asked under the very curtain. Maybe you still you didn't read the whole question on your face, but the fact that a person's question is interesting and winning, you It's clear.

Then everything is simple: let the easiest questions come first, and complex, winning ones - Then. Let's start with the trifles, move on to the more complex, rise to the very best, and finish triumphant!

Here is an uncle in the fifth row pulling his hand. Well, it is clear that his question is the simplest. Here is his word and give.

The crowd does not understand: the choice belongs to us! We choose the questions we want which are beneficial to us, and in the order we like:

- Please!

"Tell me, sorcerer, what is the name of my wife?"

What could be simpler than this? While uncle asks a question, let's throw a bridge to his head.

Some call it a beam. You can call it whatever you like. If you like the beam please

let there be a beam. Let us throw a beam invisible to him between the eyes and ask affectionately: "So what about your wife name?" He will answer: "Clara". You can have time to ask his name: "What is your name?" Answer: Karl.

We need time for these secret negotiations. We'll buy time by distracting the crowd. Example: "Is you yourself, my friend, do not remember what her name is?

While they will laugh, we will complete our secret conversation and announce:

My friend Carl! Your wife's name is Clara! Here she is sitting next to you!

You don't need to be a magician for the last phrase. It is clear to everyone: the question is, what is the name of the wife, a man can ask only if she is nearby. This is how men are arranged, and this must be understood: if his wife is not around, he will not ask such a question.

It may turn out that the questioner has a wife on one side, and a woman on the other. extraneous. In the circus, everyone is compressed. Again, no problem. Let's call the wife's name: "Clara!" - she and shines.

And if it's still not clear who is the wife and who is the stranger, let's glance at both and ask question:

"Are the brown shoes that you bought in the store yesterday morning tight, Clara?"

Frans Mauer?

The audience will laugh and clap their hands until they ring. Not bad for a start. Must be at the very beginning the most trifling questions establish complete confidence in yourself. No one will climb to Carl's passport make sure no one asks Clara if that's really her name and if it's true that she's wearing new brown shoes bought from Frans Mauer yesterday morning. Everyone already knows that the sorcerer is not wrong. Only the neighbors see the reaction of the shocked Carl and Clara, and everyone else just believes confident tone of the sorcerer.

But if you and I are engaged in sorcery, how can we find out that Clara bought shoes, which ones, when and where?

This is the simplest: just look at it.

Now we give the floor again, and again to the one who has an easy question:

"Tell me, sorcerer, how much money is in my right pocket?"

It's good that the question is long. While he is asking a question, we will throw the bridge, oncoming Ask questions, get answers...

"My friend Gerhard, you don't have any money in your right pocket. There you have a hole.

People will definitely laugh at this answer. And we, without wasting time, calculate that Gerhard in the left pocket may be ... However, this can be done openly and out loud:

- Come on, friend Gerhard, count together. You received a paycheck yesterday. So? 27 marks 40 pfennigs. First of all, you went to a tavern, drank three schnapps and three beers. Nothing wrong with that, Gerhard. A working person once a week, on Saturday, on the day of pay, is allowed. I, you know, I'm not a fool drink beer. And today you brought your whole family to the circus to see me: both your wife Marta, and little Anna, and Heinz, and Martin. What is left in your pocket? Subtract three beers and three schnapps. Let's take away two adults and three children's tickets in the seventeenth row, well, count? In your left pocket, my friend, three marks and ten pennies. And ten marks your wife Marta behind the closet hid. You are lucky, Gerhard, Martha is a good hostess, caring and economical. She yesterday you beat a little, but for a week you will have enough. You did the right thing, Gerhard, that the whole family came to me brought to the circus. Times are hard, no one has money, but I will not disappoint your children today. I will work all evening just for them. I promise you, Gerhard, they will laugh.

5

Moscow rejoices. The Country of Soviets rejoices. All progressive mankind rejoices. March 10, 1939 At the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Comrade Stalin declared that a new imperialist war has already begun! Hooray! She is already in her second year on a huge territories from Shanghai to Gibraltar and captured more than 500 million people.

The unfinished skeptics whisper in the ears of the people that Comrade Stalin is lying a little, no
There is no World War II yet. But skeptics are beaten. If Comrade Stalin said that World War II
The war has already begun, so that's the way it is. Or so it will be! Soon the capitalists will gnaw each other
throats, and that's when ... And that's when!

The Soviet people trust Comrade Stalin! And if the Second World War has not yet played out
in all its terrible splendor, then Comrade Stalin and his valiant scouts will do everything
so that it bursts, flares up, blazes! And as soon as possible! Already this year! IN
1939! Comrade Stalin will do everything to ensure that the great war captures all the countries of the enemies, so that the enemies
they killed each other and wiped out borders, cities and powers from the face of the earth!

Let the storm come on!

6

Investigators of the NKVD - preferential calculation of length of service. Like divers. Served for a year, two
write down. Serve ten, write down twenty. Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, accepting the post of People's Commissar
of the Interior in the fall of 1936, not only introduced a new uniform for the Chekists, not only increased
three times the pay, but also established a new procedure for calculating length of service: every year of service of the Chekist
counted for three years. Like frontline soldiers. And what, in fact, is the Lefortovo investigator
differs from the army commander, who, under the bullets of enemies, under the explosions of shells, raised
their fighters to attack? Nothing different. The investigator has the same tension (if not more), he
the same risk, the same front, only invisible, only secret.

It is a pity that the law does not have retroactive effect, and those who in 1937 for twenty years in the bodies
served, you can record in a personal file only forty years of service, but not sixty.
But on the other hand, in two years, for the 37th and 38th, each Chekist wound up six years of service ... Only ...

But who needs all this now?

Yezhovites are being defeated, people are disappearing. They are taken at night. Pick up on weekdays and holidays.
They are taken on the way home and on the way to work. And at work. They are taken on trains, at dachas, in
shops, restaurants. They are taken dressed. They are taken naked. In the bath. In Sanduny.

- Citizen, you are under arrest, let's go!

"Is it you, comrade?"

- A goose is not a comrade to a pig. Go bitch!

- Give me panties! I'm still a third-rank state security commissioner!

- Former commissioner. You can do without panties. Go, bastard. Let the workers and peasants attack you
look!

Capture groups are formed from former subordinates of the one who is taken. So reliable: the former
a subordinate is always a beast. And the more he pleased his boss before, than

diligently licked the ass, the more atrocities in it now. To be cleansed. To in sympathy was not suspected. In order not to thunder under the ax yourself.

But they take it too. Just arrested his boss, just searched, just smashed his face, just handed over to the guards, and then they came for you ... And according to the same scheme: after all, you also have subordinates were and also catered to ... So they are appointed to arrest. And yesterday's subordinates turn to stone face, the sparks of disinterested service go out in their eyes, warm voices freeze, and the former faithful friend, comrade and indispensable executor of any orders suddenly¹ overflows with arrogance and pride and yells as is customary in this case:

- Go bitch!

7

It is not true that no one, except for the cleaners, counted the rooms in the vast hedgehog apartment. This I was talking nonsense. Frozen. He blurted out without thinking.

Didn't understand. Didn't get in. And it wasn't like that at all. It was just the opposite. It was to whom and besides the cleaners, those rooms count...

As soon as Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov was appointed in the fall of 1936 as the new people's commissar internal affairs, so he immediately began to expand his main apartment on Kiselný and improve. Architects, engineers, workers - all personally selected for such a business. And those they did their best: they did not spare pink and white marble, the parquet was bog oak, the walls were polished walnut root, furniture - precious mahogany, and naked aunts were dragged from museums. Aunts - on canvas, in bronze, in marble. So the inventories included: figure No. 4139, from the Hermitage, stone, semi-feminine, white, Greek origin, antique, used - former used, defective (hands torn off to the very shoulders). With those figures, the whole Yezhov apartment forced. Who needs them in museums, armless?

And besides everything, architects, engineers and workers carefully measured all Yezhov's rooms, every closet, every nook and cranny made detailed plans. And the plans were handed over to the right place. Let me explain: where you need to go is to the Institute of the World Revolution. Comrade Holovanov.

And while comrade Yezhov's housing conditions were improved, while Yezhov's main apartment landscaped and furnished with stone figures, very close, on the next street, opened office "Mosgorselsbyt", and the street itself "Metro-stroy" turned around and blocked with fences.

Why wrecked?

What's your doggy business? So it is necessary! And don't ask stupid questions. In general, who interest in ditches and pits? All of Moscow has been dug up by them. In this case, however, due to give to Metrostroy: they didn't tinker for long, the fences were removed, the foundation pit was covered, the street was covered with asphalt flooded.

So: they turned the street around not in vain. Under that street is a special trust "Metrostroy" bunker concrete erected. The best disguise is to do everything in plain sight: to dig a foundation pit, neither light nor dawn rattle with dump trucks, drag dirt along the pavements, and also the slogan at the entrance with carnations to say: "We will hand over the object ahead of schedule for the glorious anniversary of the Cheka-NKVD!"

The entrance to the bunker is through the Mosgorselsbyt office. Who is supposed to. And many should.

In the metrostroyevsky bunker - plans for a zhovy apartment. On every wall. And in the middle of the main concrete hall - the layout of the apartment. What is bad: there are a lot of premises in the apartment under control, and guests to Yezhov every evening - herds, herds.

What's good: they're all here. And almost every evening. Information is taken simultaneously from a hundred twenty-four microphones. Removed from the very first day Comrade Yezhov took office head of the NKVD. Comrade Yezhov has now been dismissed from his post, but the work continues. And will be continue until the last Yezhovite is met in the darkness of the night by cheerful guys who are not at night and they will not utter the ritual phrase: "Go, bitch! .." And the last, like everyone else in work shifts guess, it will be Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov himself, at home - Nicole.

CHAPTER 10

1

The operators in the bunker are not just anyone, but the best naval acoustics. Any of them, the noise of the screws behind hearing for many miles, at once determine the type of ship, approximate displacement, direction and movement speed. And especially dashing according to the features of the noise that are elusive to our ear, also by name that ship will be called. At this point, turn on your memory and remember how many guns on that ship calibers, remember the name of the captain ...

These guys, the best of those who served in the fleets, are taken here. The job is not easy: Yezhov's guests are galloping through the corridors and halls, driven by bodily itching, go and follow, to in which room. Phonograms of speeches by responsible comrades from the NKVD have long been filmed on party conferences and congresses and subjected to multifaceted analysis, so that acoustics voices are distinguished. But only until the guests get drunk. And they get drunk. And fast. Therefore, often Comrade Stalin simply has to report snippets of phrases: with a binge at the Yezhovs the voices of guests fade, hoarse and creak unpredictably, and each time in a different manner. Comrade Stalin is sympathetic and demands authenticity: it is better not to identify the speaker than define incorrectly.

But that's not all. It is important to know who said what, but even more important, to whom. Because the system invented: rubber dolls ordered with numbers. Doll No. 1 with a muzzle and a figure for Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov is similar. For greater similarity, marshal stars are painted on the puppet collar. Other dolls - a herd. Numbers - like in American football: less number - more important guest. And then the dolls are placed in the rooms and corridors of the layout of a boundless apartment. Further simple - Comrade Trilisser was auditioned in room No. 41 a minute ago, now his voice is heard in room No. 24. Accordingly, doll No. 9, very similar to Comrade Trilisser, rearranged on the layout from one room to another. Guests every evening - up to a hundred or more. Every minute they move through the rooms, halls and corridors, like pieces of glass in kaleidoscope. Accordingly, the dolls are moved on the layout. Every minute automatic a camera from the ceiling captures the position of the dolls. Then, with a certain degree of accuracy, establish what exactly Comrade Trilisser said in room No. 24 at 11:51 p.m. and who attended this.

Comrade Trilisser said the following:

- What is this Caucasian Gutalin doing! What is he doing! He cuts the throats of professionals. Well well, he'll cut us all. And then what? What, tell me, next? Will he be able without us, without professionals?

- Recently, Yashka Serebryansky was taken. This is the security officer of the crystal choice.

- Drop it. I know Silver. Rat. Rather, Gotalin slapped him. If Gotalin had

there were brains, then Yashka Serebryansky should not be shot in the Stalinist basement, but released against us.

Saving his skin, Yashka Serebryansky will gnaw through all of us, strangle everyone.

2

Reports are laid down on Stalin's table. "I know Serebryansky. Rat... If Gotalin had brains ... Yashka Serebryansky will gnaw through all of us, strangle everyone ... "

— Comrade Holovanov, the enemies doubt whether Gotalin has brains. I'm forced by enemies
disappoint: Gotalin has brains. Where is Silver?

- Comrade Stalin, Serebryansky is on death row. Awaiting execution.

- Release. And unleash it on our own, on the Yezhovites.

- There is a release! Got to pull down!

"I will follow the advice of Comrade Trilisser, I will set Serebryansky on his yesterday's friends. A
It's time to take Trilisser himself.

- There is a Trilisser to take. And Yezhov?

- Let him walk. Yezhov is the last. Uncertainty is the worst. Let him walk in
uncertainty. And prepare new humiliations for Yezhov.

- Comrade Stalin, I have a whole cascade of humiliations prepared for Yezhov.

- So go ahead. Don't lose perspective. How do you now understand your main goal?

- The main goal is the new chief of the NKVD, Comrade Beria.

- Right. What is done?

- The bunker at the Beria house is being built ahead of schedule.

- Fine.

- We recruited the head of the Beria special train Kabalava, Kabalava's deputy,
one of the cryptographers, a steam locomotive stoker and the owner of the Beria camping harem, a eunuch.

- On behalf of whom did you recruit?

- The head of the Beria special train, Kabalava, was recruited on behalf of Polish intelligence. IN
in which case, if Beria suspects something was wrong, then even under torture, Kabalava will admit
that he worked for the Poles, but Kabalava does not suspect our existence. And one more thing: in case
If necessary, we can arrest him and shoot him as a Polish spy. Evidence in
our hands. The rest we recruited on behalf of the German and British intelligence services. In which case and
comrade Beria can be charged with: what are you around you Polish, English and
German spies did not reveal?

- Fine. But in addition to recruiting, it is necessary to assign people to Comrade Beria who

hate. But put it in such a way that Beria is sure: he himself chose each person. Need to surround him with a ring of secret envious people and haters.

- We'll impose it, Comrade Stalin.
- And Zavenyagin too.

3

Killing a person is easy. Ordered - killed. Just need to be careful to embarrass didn't work out. When the question is blunt: to kill - not to kill, you should make sure, is he? Kholovanov looked at the photo in his personal file: a handsome captain of the state security with an order on his chest, with the insignia of an army colonel. Then to the original raised the pupils. There is no similarity. They took a man only thirteen days ago. Just two weeks fed, and even then for less than two weeks, and he no longer looked like his photograph. With a skeleton more similarities. There was no need to feed him, all the same - execution. Result: the face does not look like who laughs from the photo. In addition, they also made "black eyes" for him - they bloodied his face to solid blue with black tints. From white to black. And the hair, on the contrary, from black tar - now white, old man's.

And you can't recognize him by his form: they tore the order - they didn't spare the tunic, but the colonel's buttonholes torn off along with the gate.

They flogged him with machine-gun ramrods, without taking off his clothes, because he was all in shreds of clothes and his skins. All this in the blood dried up into a single monolith. His commander's boots still in the day the arrest was pulled off by the guards and driven into the Tishinsky market. Soldier boots instead of boots worn down: dirty, torn, stinking. As expected - no laces. There are two reasons here: did not run away and so as not to strangle himself. You are not ordered to run away from here. And you are not allowed to choke. Workers' and Peasants' eat a bullet if it is prescribed, but you can't manage your own life. You are not her master.

- Full Name?

Serebryansky Yakov Arnoldovich.

- Title?

Former State Security Captain.

- Awards?

- Order of Lenin, December 31, 1936.
- For what?

- For exposing the former People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, the enemy of the people, Heinrich Yagoda.

- Who represented the order?

Yezhov and Trilisser.

- Everything fits. It's you, citizen Serebryansky. Then like this: here's a gun for you ... - took out

Holovanov from the desk drawer and placed in front of the former captain of state security brand new, cleaned, but still smelling of factory grease "TT".

"Here are the cartridges," he poured out a handful. - Do not rush to shoot yourself without wondering why give a gun. Here is a new tunic with new insignia and belt. Cap, trousers and get the boots later. Now there is no time. The death sentence has not been lifted from you ... Let's see how it goes will turn around. And in the rank you were restored, moreover, you were ahead of schedule assigned a new rank - Major state security, in a military way - a brigade commander, among the Americans it is called a brigade general. Time does not endure. Here's an arrest warrant for your former boss, enemy of the people. Trilissera. Form a capture group from Trilisser's subordinates and take him.

— There are take.

"Ten minutes to form a capture group. Twenty-seven people from the former I summoned Trilisser's subordinates. They are waiting. Choose as many capture groups as you need, and the one you like. The choice is yours. We'll shoot the rest.

- Understood.

And one more thing: do not try to drink and eat. You are exhausted, any food can kill you. hold back difficult, but I gave the order to your guards to beat any food out of your hands. You are now recommended only broth.

Holovanov rang the bell, the door opened, and a thick, spicy smell wafted in...

The newly minted general of the NKVD jerked his head-skull towards the smell. His broken eyes magnetized to a silver saucepan, and besides her, these eyes saw nothing else, his nostrils trembled, he seemed to be ... Dirty hands with broken, swollen black-purple fingers convulsively seized the table ... and gently unclenched. The young general of the NKVD was drawn into a deep, protracted hunger fainting.

4

Makar, Stalin's new executioner-cinematographer, finished his working day. By dawn.

The spectator stood up, thanked Makar for his work, and, bowing, left satisfied.

Makar was left alone. Turned off the equipment, rewound the tapes, put them in boxes, unfolded mattress. (At Makar, at any workplace, just in case, a mattress is in store.) It's a pity, blankets with no pillow. Nothing, he's used to it. Where are you going this early? Metro is closed, trams are not thunder...

Makar slept well and for a long time always and everywhere, in any position, in any position in which he sleep forced. If sleep did not happen for a long time, he could pass out for one minute. Could and on half a minute. He could sleep on the go, on the run, in flight, in the fall.

He covered himself with a pea coat, stretched out his legs.

He dreamed of shooting a girl with big eyes like a dragonfly.

Shooting is work. The execution never worried Makar. After all, the butcher does not worry, carcasses chopping pork. Why should the artist be concerned? Therefore, Makar is always calm. Bye not sleeping. And in a dream he was worried for some reason: he shoots - he is worried, he pushes the executed man into the pit - worries, the next one takes - again worries. In dreams, executions touched his soul sweet sadness. And sometimes he even felt uneasy, and he screamed. And now in a dream Makar writhed and screamed. Today he dreamed of the handsome Holovanov, who was killing a girl. This execution Makar himself saw only in the movies, and now - in a dream. This execution fell not to him, but to Uncle Vasya. Makar himself was not at the special stage at that time: for his high performance in work, he received a ticket to a sanatorium and rested with noble miners, walked through the forest, watched films about funny guys and about Chapaev. Now, in a dream, for some reason Makar was present at that execution. shot Kholovanov, and Makar drove him away, did not let him shoot ...

5

Makar slept in a heavy sleep all day in a stuffy dark movie booth, whispering something, cursing, shouted, turned around, wanting to wake up, fell silent again, calmed down, and then she appeared again. Makar heard that the capitalists have already made multi-colored films, where, in addition to black, white and gray colors sometimes still flashes both red and green. These stories about colorful Makar did not really believe in films ... But not in a dream. In a dream, he believed everything. In his sleep he twisted again a cheerful film to the only viewer, and that film was multi-colored, like the capitalists. Then he fell right into that film and wandered through that spring forest - they were shooting nearby and they were shooting, and he was picking snowdrops. For her. Somehow he knew that she would be the last. AND he was torn: he wanted to collect a larger bouquet, and not be late. Makar runs through the forest, picking flowers, He wants to collect more and quickly, so that the best. And he pushes himself: yes, hurry up, hurry up! Would be successful! I would like to give it until Kholovanov shoots ... Makar wants to pick another this flower and this one. And one more. And the flowers are the beauty of the beloved, and his whole dream is blue-violet. And the eyes of the dragonfly girl are blue-blue.

He runs up to the execution pit, and Holovanov shoots... Makar rushes to the gun... Slow down, they say, Dragon! I'll give her flowers, then shoot. How about without flowers?

6

— Mr. Messer, we are Americans.

“Greetings, O messengers of distant America!

- Mr. Messer, we will start with the main thing: a pair of good shoes - a dollar. A good suit

- five. The dollar is gold. To make it easier, we will not talk about ounces and pounds, but about understandable

you grams. One dollar is a little more than a gram of 999 pure gold. To begin with we offer you one million dollars, or if you like, a ton of pure gold. A ton with hook.

This is an advance.

- For what services?
- You will come with us, we offer an interesting job ...
- I'm not going with you.

Why, may I ask?

- Because you called yourself Americans, so it is, but you did not say which country call me...

- We wanted to tell you this after a short introduction - at first we named the amount advance, and then they wanted to explain the rest of the details.

- Don't bother yourself. I know what country you are calling me to. But I made my choice before.

- What choice, if not a secret?

- My choice is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. My choice is Moscow. My choice — Stalin.

7

Early in the morning Comrade Trilisser returns to an empty apartment. Sleep.

The end of the ball. The candles are extinguished. Home. Comrade Trilisser doesn't have to go to work. Him no more work. And always has been. In early youth, in 1901, Comrade Trilisser enrolled in a party of some Lenin and immediately got a good, necessary, well-paid job: to agitate the workers not to work. Sixteen years as a damned comrade Trilisser at this job worked, and the workers whom he agitated did not work. Comrade Trilisser worked well, but for good work Comrade Lenin paid money. Comrade Lenin always had money. From some sources. Then the comrades took power, and Trilisser went high and fast: he took up the post Head of the Foreign Department of the OGPU. The Cheka changed its name, turned into the Cheka, then into the GPU, OGPU, NKVD. And the Foreign Department did not change its names in those days. And to work as its head was the most honorable thing. The work is the same: to agitate the workers not to work. Only not their own, but enemy. On a global scale. With huge capital, Comrade Trilisser twisted, shook the world millions of demonstrations of workers who, with the money of the homeland of the world proletariat seduced not to work. The Power of Comrade Trilisser Beyond the State of Workers and Peasants did not know the limits. Punish and pardon - he decided whom, and liquidation is not even on the list of problems turned on: just pick up the phone and pronounce the name clearly so that the performers they killed the very one who was ordered. So that there is no error. To not cut a second time. And were with a friend Trilisser's beloved students. The most beloved is Yashka Serebryansky. Yashku comrade Trilisser himself

brought up, nurtured, put on the most responsible business - on foreign purification, on liquidation ... Comrade Trilisser later had many posts, and one was higher than the other. Came up to member of the executive committee of the Comintern, headquarters of the World Revolution, then all control in the country was in charge...

But always, at all posts, it's not that Trilisser knew, not that he heard out of the corner of his ear, not that to feel, but understand and guess: over the secret order of swordsmen named Cheka-GPU Stalin's NKVD also has its own secret Order of the Sword; over the headquarters of the World there is still some kind of headquarters for the revolution, which manages the world revolution; over control of workers cunning Stalin still has his own special control over the peasant ...

CHAPTER 11

1

Trilisser had high positions - now there are no positions. There were pupils, pupils, favorites - they are no more. What remained of its former grandeur was the noisy bossy apartment and dachas in Pavshino and Yalta...

does it drag too much? Isn't it time to jump off this tram? Is everything going too well?

Everyone wanted to jump off... And he kept putting it off. Every time: not now. Every time: one more day. Another one. In recent years, more and more often, waking up at night, I looked at the ceiling for hours. Was it necessary at all climb this mountain? Brother Mishka has been sitting in the market all his life in Zaporozhye, selling shoelaces, and happy. He sits for himself, spread out the laces, covered himself with a newspaper from the sun ... Brother Mishka is up to a hundred years old live. He will survive both Gotalin of the Caucasus, and those who will be after ...

Brother Mishka sells shoelaces, he is not afraid of anyone, but he twirls capitals no less, than the Foreign Department of the OGPU. And, it's true, Brother Mishka has favorite students who have secrets commerce can be transferred. And comrade Trilisser has no more favorite students - all turned away, everyone jumped back. It just didn't save them. All Gotalin Caucasian cleaned up. All shot-cut. Rarely, very few of them are still alive. And even then in the death chambers the last days are counting down. This is good. Somewhere very close beznosnaya death walks. And the old man does not want Trilisser to accept death from his student, from his former favorite, from his pupil. Already it's better to go to an unknown executioner...

Life passed, thundered like a revolutionary steam locomotive... Locomotive-steam locomotive, red wheels... Why fall into the clutches of your favorite student? Why go to an unfamiliar executioner? For what? In the office Trilisser behind the bookshelf by the best master of the Foreign Department, the cache is embedded. There is the most important ... And there - a Japanese pistol "Nambu" caliber extraordinary - eight millimeters ... A good pistol, beautiful and powerful. Previously on it and the plaque was silver. With a gift inscription.

I remembered the silver plate and right there - Yashka Serebryansky ...

2

The last days, the last nights, more and more often, Trilisser's favorite student seems to be Yashka. It seems to be rubbing and trampling nearby. And it seems that every counter-cross him about Yashka Serebryansky strives to remind. Feels Trilisser Yashka nearby, like a ghost - that's for corner... Like the shadow of death. I wish I didn't get to anyone ... Trilisser calms himself, he knows: they took Yashka Serebryansky. And if they take it, they won't let go. They don't let us go.

However, the Caucasian Gutalin is capable of anything... No, we can't wait any longer. Gotta go to death without waiting for it to call out in Yashka's voice. He smiled bitterly: did he think, receiving a Japanese pistol from the hands of Trotsky himself, that he would have to shoot from it only once ... In own head...

Trilisser turned the key in the lock. He pushed the door, went into the office, pushed aside the heavy curtains. Light is in the window.

Turned...

Bookshelf turned inside out, books on the floor, chipped oak panel, safe door the hiding place wide open. And in a deep leather armchair sits the arrogant Yashka Serebryansky: his face is black, white hair, wolf teeth knocked out, tattered trousers in the mud of the torture chamber, smelly soldiers' boots without laces, dirty feet without socks...

And a new one on Yashka, a crisp, creaking lacquered harness on the same brand new ash-gray English cloth tunic with the Order of Lenin on the chest, with the general's diamonds of sparkling enamel on the blue cloth buttonholes of the state security...

- Did you run, Yasha?

- Enemy of the people Trilisser, don't you dare call me Yasha, I'm not Yasha, but Major State Security Serebryansky. You are under arrest, Trilisser, enemy of the people.

- Yasha! Comrade Silver!

- What am I to you, bugger, comrade? Take him! Go bitch.

3

In any business - a choice: one way or another... In human society - anarchy or organization. Choose. If anarchy, then it is no longer a society.

If we want to preserve society, then we cannot do without organization. That's why we die turning into animals, or choose an organization. But then again the choice: which one organization? Which one is better for humanity? Which is better? Organization is someone's authority. Power one. Or mob power. What to choose? One can be bad or good, wise or foolish, cruel or kind, cowardly or brave. And the crowd can't be good. Can not be kind. Can't be wise. Can't be brave. The crowd is always stupid, ferocious, cruel and cowardly. One may turn out to be a dumbass, a monster, a cannibal and a sadist. And the crowd these qualities are always present. Interestingly, the one doomed to death asks for mercy from someone alone, never from team. Doomed with his animal gut knows: one can spare, the crowd - no. Power crowds are always worse than the power of one. One can be wise, a group can't be wise Maybe. A brilliant guess can illuminate one head, but it cannot illuminate a hundred heads at once. Because one who understands must explain his idea to the crowd.

But how to find the ruler over people? Trust it to the crowd? To the crowd with a show of hands or Throwing pieces of paper into a box she chose her own ruler? How does the crowd find its chosen one? Simple: in appearance. The main choice of a person in life is the choice of a life partner, the choice of whom he will continue his lineage. This choice people make in appearance. If you give free rein to the crowd, then this is exactly what she will do - she will appoint the ruler according to external data, the one who is prettier. IN America has never had a bald president. This is unsympathetic. The crowd doesn't like that. So can the crowd be trusted to choose the leader? No, nature ordered correctly: in a wolf pack one rules, and he appoints himself, proving to everyone that he is the best and only for the pack choice. The main argument is that the opponent is defeated, his tail between his legs.

Rudolf Messer knows that in human history the power of one is the rule. The power of the crowd exception. Because the crowd is not capable of creation, only of destruction. mob power always ended with the dictatorship of one. Or the collapse of all.

Messer does not want power. But he is drawn to this power to look.

Point blank.

4

Rudolf Messer stretched himself, yawned long and sweetly, smiled. He slept. Sleep first was anxious and painful. He was teased and tormented by a dream about a question in the Berlin circus and about the answer, about the impudent departure from the circus past the policemen, their mouths gaping. He was tormented by a dream about wandering through a huge city, about a cold rain with snowflake drops that fall from the sky before form into crystals, he dreamed of a snarling black Rottweiler bitch with red pimples on belly and undertail, he dreamed of arrest and prison... And an underground feast... Then he stopped moaning and writhe, then his lips stretched into a smile, then hundreds of his underground admirers turned into billions of fluffy snowflakes, the black sky mixed with the white earth, and he flew weightless together with them, snowflakes, into the alluring, boundless and bottomless world of darkness. Then many, many he didn't dream for hours, he just slept, filled with strength, like a powerful battery of energy.

He woke up with a blissful smile on his lips, feeling in his soul and in his shoulders an invincible power, listened to the proposal of two handsome Americans, figured out how he might look in kind a million dollar stack of money and how much it can weigh, stretched again, again he yawned sweetly, kneaded his face with his hands, driving away sleep, and politely said goodbye to the Americans:

- Goodbye, gentlemen. Go and don't look back.

They stood up, bowed, turned and walked. Without looking back. Fate soon parted the two Americans, but each of them had a long and happy life, they went through tens of thousands kilometers along the difficult paths of a secret war. Both were lucky and lucky. Only for both a slight oddity was noticed, however, which did not interfere with anything in their life: they never

looked back.

5

Rudolf Messer passed through a dark passage, turned around the corner. Knew: around the corner two policemen. Without a dog. There was no choice. Therefore, go ahead!

- Stop! Who is that? Document!

Messer did not talk to them for a long time. He just thought for a moment, realizing that create. Previously, he beat off the memory of his enemies. Gotta try something new send them away. I thought where exactly you can send them so beautiful. Maybe in America. Just order them to go to America, and they are like that, in police uniform, with rubber sticks and with pistols, they will go to the station to buy tickets to America ... They, of course, will be stopped and sent where follows. But for the rest of their lives they will rush to the distant unknown America, like salmon rush to the headwaters of a wild, unknown to them rapids river, sacrificing their lives.

"Shall I send you guys to America?"

Silently the policemen are silent. They are ready to go anywhere. At least to the North Pole. At least for Southern.

- Okay, I won't send it to America. Stay in Berlin. Just leave at another time.

The past is too dark, go to a brighter future. It is now 1939, the thirties are coming to an end.

Go to the forties. Not very far. In the mid forties. It's March now. Go to March 1945.

"Yes," they snapped, their faces contorted. They shied under the walls, bending, pulling heads to the shoulders and covering them with their hands, they ran. This is how people behave under artillery shelling or bombing ... As if you can protect your head with your own hand.

By nature, our sorcerer was not an evil person. He wanted the best. He didn't know what was going to happen Berlin in March 1945. He just wasn't interested in it yet. The future is always with us seems joyful and bright, that's why he sent them to the future. Out of the goodness of my heart - near future.

In the distance, everything is incomprehensible. It turned out that in March 1945 it would not be very fun in Berlin.

And they, crouching, ran along the street, stumbling and crouching, demonstrating a clear intention to dive into the nearest basement.

The sorcerer felt sorry for these people. But he did not cancel his orders.

6

The evening has died down. By morning. Yezhov alone. Among the armless figures. Drunk. Not fatal. thousands Yezhovites went under the Stalinist axe. People disappear. Frinovsky disappeared. Like under ice failed. Was. Now he is gone. After Frinovsky - Zakovsky, Velsky, Zhukovsky, Agranov,

Filaretov ... After them, Trilisser remained the most prominent in Yezhov's circle. But now he's gone too.

Trilisser was last seen two days ago at Yezhov's carnival, he went home, and that's it.

He is not. Even a drunk person should soberly evaluate such information. And do conclusion. And the conclusion is simple: the next one will be himself - Kolenka, whom everyone loves so much, Nikolasha, Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, Nicole.

Squeezed Nikolai Ivanovich whiskey: what to do? There is a way out. From the clutches of death Zavenyagin somehow broke free and went steeply up the hill. And Yashka Serebryansky escaped and was also promoted. New boots received, in the early morning, at the departure of the guests, it seemed to accidentally appear ... I taxied in the car ... Then but a leather man rolls up to him on a motorcycle ... Serebryansky, he doesn't attack his ex-friends looking, gives instructions to the leather man. For show off. Look, they say, Yezhov's bitches, what a Beria I am shut up! He walks, the bastard, creaks with his sword-belt, winks with an impudent eye, with a muzzle of a bat, does not healed, grins: I, they say, you ...

What to do?

The way out suggests itself: write a letter to Gutalin.

7

— Comrade Stalin, a letter from Yezhov.

— Long?

— Long.

- Anything important?

- Justified.

- It doesn't matter.

And offers...

- I'm listening.

- In the event of war, the Red Army should deliver the main blow not on Germany, but on Romania to cut off Germany from oil sources...

- Reasonably, but we thought of this even without Yezhov.

- If our main blow will be inflicted on Romania and oil will be cut off, then through in a very short time, German tanks will lose the ability to move, and aircraft will fly.

- That's right too. But we ourselves have come to this.

- Based on this, Yezhov proposes to withdraw from production and drastically reduce in the troops the number of anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns: if the Germans have no oil, if their tanks and planes stop, then we do not need anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. He offers not to spend manpower and resources on updating the anti-aircraft artillery of warships and control facilities anti-aircraft fire, proposes to withdraw from production and withdraw from the troops anti-tank rifles as

troops do not need.

- All this is correct, comrade Kholovanov, but we got to all this without Yezhov.

We are removing anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns from production, anti-aircraft artillery on ships

We will not update, we will take anti-tank rifles from the troops.

- In Yezhov's letter, there is one more proposal: if anti-tank rifles still don't needed to fight tanks, use them to destroy the enemies of the people.

- Interesting. Understand and report.

CHAPTER 12

1

What is an agency exit?

- Our intelligence officer was in Moscow, and now he is where he was ordered to work.

This is the agent's exit.

Nothing works for the new one. The whole group is telling her that an undercover exit is a set of reconnaissance measures for the secret transfer of a scout or agent to the area of execution combat mission. She understands everything, only she translates any concepts into her own language and simplifies them to absolutely unacceptable simplicity, losing all the complexity, beauty and academicism of formulations.

— What is legalization?

- We must make sure that no one asks who I am and where I came from. And if they ask you need to have such an answer and such documents that they would believe other questions for backfilling and for blockage was not set.

What is a recruiting base?

- These are my new foreign friends: the more the better. One in a hundred is a must interesting to me and intelligence. Maybe ten out of a hundred.

No, just listen! You can not do it this way. She doesn't understand anything! Legalization is also set of activities...

And the recruiting base is a combination of institutions and individuals ... How to make this fool use generally accepted scientific definitions?!

2

This is called developing operational thinking. Got a brand new fat folder with documents: the plan of the Winter Palace, the plans of palaces in Peterhof, the main routes of movement Emperor Nicholas in the city, information about the security system, drawings of the royal yacht "Standard", a list of persons admitted to the person of the autocrat ... And many, many more.

The condition is mild: sleep as much as you like, walk as much as you want, eat and drink when you like, but in 48 hours to study the material, understand it, draw conclusions, and by the end of the second day, hand over the notebook with essay on the topic "How would I kill the king."

The new girl weighed, threw up a folder on two hands and decided: she wouldn't burn out to sleep. And help nowhere to wait. Other girls are also busy, they also write essays with plans for destruction Genghis Khan, Bonaparte, Nero, Caligula, Timur and Alexander the Great.

3

After two days without sleep, an hour of rest. Only the girls fell asleep - rise. Enough, puppets rag, slept and will be. Need to poke. In the Spanish group, as in all others, each a new day is harder than all the previous days of life put together. Yes, and it's time to learn for all subsequent days until the very last, for all time: if you want to achieve something in this life, it is necessary to work in such a way that lack of sleep exfoliates, accumulates and torments. And increase the load. Every day. Up to and including the very last.

You need to be successful in life. meet. And then we'll sleep...

"Suppose, girls, that all of you killed your Nikolaev, Alexandrov and Genghis Khans. A what's next?

Indeed, what next? Because each - two notebooks. In all notebooks vulture "Top secret". One notebook is a draft. The second is for the main work. The topic is set: "A what's next?"

4

Killing the lord is not a problem. The problem is to seize power after the murder. To keep the power. To keep out of hand. And it's slippery.

Think Siamese cats. And write. And so that the service does not seem like honey, to each - internship in the chambers of inquiry. Day and night - interrogations, interrogations, interrogations. With passion. Need to extract information from suspected enemies. Exact information. Methods for getting started simple: enemies, for example, can be rubbed with ropes. Grind enemy hands. Legs. Stomach. You can skip the rope between the fingers or toes. Is there anything else that can be tweaked... You can use a thick rope, you can use a thin one: ropes of different thicknesses have their own advantages. Can rub quickly. It can be slow. Again, different effect. The trouble is that when applying even of such simple methods of interrogation, the enemy begins to admit everything, including that which is not was. But here - not the NKVD. Here the institution is serious, and it is required to extract only reliable information. information. Separate the wheat from the chaff.

Each interrogation gives students new knowledge, new skills. From simple to complex. From primitive methods of inquiry - to more effective ones, and from them - higher and higher up the ladder knowledge to the shining heights of professionalism.

Sorry, time is running out. World revolution is not far off. So rub, girls, enemies ropes, straps, cables and think, think, think. How to present a topic. That was everything is simple and clear. And think about new compositions. Try to anticipate the examiner try to understand his logic and figure out the theme of the next essay... Who knows under what conditions it will fall out to be written.

And the one who invents topics for essays has an inexhaustible fantasy, like enthusiasm million.

5

Someone Bram once wrote a great book - Animal Life. About animals. In many volumes Bram painted a brutal life: how animals live, what they eat, how they reproduce, he showed his brutal habits with examples and embellished the book with many more pictures, because visibility is the head of everything.

Taking Bram as an example, the Institute of the World Revolution created its own multi-volume - "Life kings." And in that multi-volume book it is written in all details where the kings live, what they eat, how multiply, royal habits are explained by examples, and enticing pictures in those volumes in multitude. Outperforming old man Bram, the authors added another section to their study: "How to fight the kings." Because of this section, the entire book is classified.

This section is the most important. Everything here is about the device of the guillotine, which the royal heads chopped down, and about the tactics of the bombers who blew up Alexander the Liberator, and what passion interesting details about the liquidation of Nikolashka the Bloody, Nikolashka the Second and the last.

In the Spanish group, the emphasis is on hatred. As, however, and in all other groups. Without proletarian hatred is indispensable. Everything is based on it, on hatred. Will someday fall girls to kill kings, presidents, princes and counts, ministers and bankers, and for such a thing anger is needed proletarian. Intransigence.

6

And another essay. The topic seems to be simple: "How to subdue one hundred million free citizens." But the difficulty lies in the fact that only two weeks are cut off for thinking about the topic. And they don't sit writers in the quiet of the office. Not at all - each one is hung with parachutes and, having announced the topic, they are thrown from behind heavy clouds into wild snowy mountains. To the Pamirs. No map, no compass, no special equipment, without emergency soldering, without money. We must land softly, bury the parachute in the snow, present Moscow as an enemy capital and sneak into it. Gotta find my way home meet the deadline, you must not get caught on the route, and then, after slightly drying and warming up having fattened up, one's thoughts should be stated clearly, simply, clearly, intelligibly and two notebooks, with essay and draft, hand over to the secret part.

7

- Comrade Stalin, Yezhov gave only the idea of a new unusual use of anti-tank guns. We developed the idea. The idea is good. If we need, for example, to destroy Trotsky in

Mexico, there is no better way.

- No. I will not allow Trotsky to be killed by an explosion or a bullet. I'm not so kind give Trotsky instant death. Better send a man with an ax... You have a man with with an ax?

- We have.

- Send it here. With an axe. However, you, comrade Holovanov, do not need to do this.

Let the NKVD take care of it. They have good specialists there. For example, Silver. You Do you think Serebryansky has a man with an ax?

- Serebryansky has one.

- That's good. Let it work. Axe.

- Agree. But we have thousands of other enemies abroad that we must destroy.

themselves, not trusting the NKVD, and an anti-tank rifle is an excellent weapon for this purpose.

- You think so?

— Comrade Stalin, I am sure of it. Anti-tank rifles are used all over the world normal rifle caliber. The Germans have 7.92 mm. Our designers rose above rifle caliber, slipped through the caliber of a heavy machine gun - 12.7 mm - and created anti-tank rifles caliber 14.5 mm. It would seem that the increase in caliber is insignificant, which then millimeters, but such an increase in caliber leads to a sharp increase in the weight of the bullet, the initial speed and armor penetration. Our rifle and machine gun cartridge has a bullet weight of 9.6 grams at an initial speed of 880 meters per second, and for a 14.5 mm anti-tank rifle, the bullet weighs 64 grams at an initial speed of 1012 meters per second.

- As I see it, Comrade Holovanov, you are carried away by this business.

- I got carried away, Comrade Stalin. Our anti-tank guns are the best in the world in flatness, accuracy, firing range, armor penetration, reliability, ease of production and applications...

- Are you going to kill armored enemies?

- No. The idea is different: the power of such a gun allows you to penetrate tanks with light armor on distances up to a kilometer, and we use the power of a gun and a cartridge not to penetrate armor, but to in order to send a bullet a long distance.

- Which?

Up to four kilometers.

- What about accuracy?

- The anti-tank rifle has a very long and very powerful cartridge, so the accuracy excellent. In addition, we are not talking about mass production, but about a small series. The industry needs to order not huge batches to fight German tanks, but

a small batch, but require jeweler's thoroughness of processing, as in production sniper rifles, and craft ammo with special care. And only masters will shoot from the machine and only after a course of special training.

- What will our masters see at a distance of four kilometers?
- Everything, if you use powerful optics.
- What are the dimensions of such a gun and how much does it weigh?
- Rukavishnikov, Shpitalny, Vladimirov are also working on anti-tank rifles for us,

Simonov, Tokarev, Degtyarev. There are several acceptable samples. In general, all samples a little over two meters long. Weight is about twenty kilograms. With optics, case, cartridges, instrument - up to thirty.

- Too heavy and cumbersome.
- Agree. But we shoot from a distance at which no one will look for us. IN

in each case, we create a shelter in advance, then we produce a single shot...

- Shoot once, and the next time they will look for you at a distance of up to four kilometers.

— No, Comrade Stalin. We will keep the existence of such a weapon a secret. For this we developed a special tactic: any high-ranking people spend their holidays on the banks oceans, seas, lakes, large rivers, in a word, near reservoirs. As a rule, in such places there are mountains. or hills. We hide the arrow in the mountains or on the hills, from where the target is visible at maximum range. The shooter must choose a position so that behind the target there is a large water space. It's simple. With an accurate hit, an armor-piercing bullet with a ceramic core tears off a human head, crushes it into small pieces, and itself flies further no less kilometers. If there is a body of water behind the target, then no one will ever find a bullet and figure it out, what happened. The impression is that some unknown force just smashed his head ...

— I like your enthusiasm, comrade Holovanov. You are describing a head tear very figuratively, knowingly. Have you already tried?

CHAPTER 13

1

Such a gun has a very strong sound of a shot. We are thinking about it. We are saved by the difference in bullet speed and sound propagation speed. The bullet, gradually losing speed, passes distance in five seconds, and the sound reaches in twelve. If a bullet blows someone's head off, then there will be confusion and panic. And then the sound will come. We will do our best to make the sound distorted. At this stage in the development of technology, the sound of such a shot cannot be drowned out, not resorting to a structure the size of a room, but the sound can be attenuated, distorted and directed to away from the shooter, preferably up. We have developed several types of mufflers. One of them is something like a large rubber fan or peacock's tail. He's going of six elements, similar to rubber flippers, and is attached under the muzzle ...

- Too cumbersome?

- Yes.

- Where is the exit?

- The only way out is in tactics: in each individual case, a special task must be prepared for the shooter. a fixed shelter, or maybe a mobile one in a large closed car. The shooter must take only one shot. Do not under any circumstances do the second one. If you miss, you better come back to the same goal some time later, a month or two later. Our muffler the sound of a shot distorted and thrown upward. Random witnesses who are right next to the shooter's shelter, turn their heads and look for the source of the sound in the clouds, no one understands that what is the sound and where does it come from. The sound is so distorted that no one perceives it as sound. shot, rather - like a clap of thunder in a clear sky ...

- Ok, do comparative tests, order the best sample industry, adopt special groups.

- We are planning to illegally throw such weapons into the areas of its use in a future war and lay in stationary caches.

- That's right, do it.

- Eat.

— And the last question, comrade Holovanov...

— Listen, Comrade Stalin.

Where is Messer?

2

Rudolf Messer shook hands with the commander of the Polish border detachment, pushed the boat away from bank and jumped into it without getting his feet wet.

There are no problems with the Polish border guards. Messer waved his hand towards the Soviet coast and explained:

- I want to go there.

"As the sir pleases."

They did not create obstacles for him and did not ask who he was. Maybe they found out, or maybe by looking into attracting his eyes, lost the desire to ask questions. They just marveled: always from there, with Soviet side, the boats sailed in the dark, and shots clapped after them. First time someone at night he asks for the Soviet Union. Voluntarily. They are not forcibly kept in Poland.

3

Every weapon should have a name. A lot depends on the name. The name should be short, beautiful, menacing and mysterious. The title should contain everything for those who knows what it is about, at the same time this name should not say anything to those who secretly do not dedicated. What shall we call our anti-tank gun for exterminating the enemy? Did you think above this?

- I thought, Comrade Stalin.

- And what did you think of?

— SG.

— SG?

That's right: SG.

— Stalin's Thunder?

"That's right, Comrade Stalin.

- Beautiful. Very beautiful. Stalinist Thunder. Briefly, capaciously, menacingly, mysteriously. Why not call SA?

4

No one came to the carnival to Yezhov today. For the first time. It didn't happen. What is Caucasian Is Gultin preparing further? And what to do? Shoot yourself? Maybe fix everything? ask for downgrade? Leave Moscow? To Siberia? to the lowest position. commander border troops of the Far East, for example.

5

- Comrade Stalin, the commander of the special group Shirmanov and his people reached Messer through

criminal world of Berlin. They asked the leaders for permission to talk, they conveyed the request

Messer, Messer agreed. Our people introduced themselves as Americans.

- With a Ryazan accent?

- No, they were real Americans who have been working for us for a long time and fruitfully.

Messer was offered cooperation and a million dollars. Messer refused a million, and

our people were unable to convey an invitation to go to the Soviet Union. Messer stopped

conversation before they had time to fully explain everything. It is possible that Messer himself makes his way into Soviet Union.

- Why?

We have collected recordings of his famous performances. He never openly expressed his political views, but the analysis clearly indicates that he is a monarchist.

Why does he need to go to the Soviet Union?

- He, apparently, mistakenly believes that you, Comrade Stalin, are a monarch.

6

Rumor in Moscow. Rumor about Peter. Rumor in Barnaul. And on Nakhodka. Rumor from Moscow to the most outskirts. People talk about a sorcerer. Wizard in Russia. After Grishka Rasputin - the first miracle worker appeared in Rus'. In the 23 years after Grishka, many miracles happened in Russia, but there was no miracle worker. Russia yearned for a miracle worker. Waited for him. And here he is.

"Why doesn't the NKVD arrest him?"

- He puts it on the NKVD with the device.

- Miracles are harmful to our people - these are prejudices. Opium. Need to plant!

- Where?

- Well, kill it. What is he, immortal?

- Did you hear that he alienated in Kyiv?

- And what?

- Now, listen...

- In Moscow, he did not do that!

- And what did he break off in Moscow? ..

7

— Hello, Comrade Messer. My last name is Holovanov.

— Hello, Alexander Ivanovich.

- Do you know me?

- No, I do not know you.

- How do you know my name?

"I thought that was your name.

- I have the honor, Comrade Messer, to convey to you Comrade Stalin's invitation. Tomorrow at

at six o'clock in the evening he is waiting for you in the Kremlin.

- Thank you, I'll be there. Comrade Stalin, it seems to me, wants to get evidence
my abilities?

- Yes. You will bring a million dollars with you.

I don't have a million.

- Get it.

"Okay, I'll bring Comrade Stalin a million with the condition that after the demonstration I'll return it."

where you took it.

- Yes, sure. I'll order you a pass to the Kremlin...

- Thank you. Do not worry. I... no passes. Holovanov smiled:

The Kremlin is the largest and most powerful fortress in Europe. The Kremlin is vigilantly guarded.

"I'll try my best without a pass."

"Comrade Stalin will be waiting at...

- Do not waste time explaining, I know where Comrade Stalin will be waiting for me.

- Comrade Messer, the Kremlin has many palaces, churches, an arsenal, museums, barracks for a whole regiment,
administrative buildings...

Don't worry, I'll find...

CHAPTER 14

1

The dollar is good shoes. Five is a suit. Three hundred is a magnificent Lincoln. Thousand dollars - a two-story house with garages for three cars, with a spacious basement and with rooms in the attic, with autonomous heating and sewerage systems, with a swimming pool, with decent piece of land. Why do people need a million?

A strange man tore a blank sheet out of a school notebook and handed it through the bars to the cashier:

- A million dollars, please.

The bald cashier carefully examined the blank sheet, nodded:

- What should you count?

- The largest, hundreds.

- I will gladly give money, but permission for such an amount must be given by the director and treasurer.

"Yes, of course," the visitor agreed politely, showing with a soft smile that he understood the importance of the moment and respects the established order in such a venerable institution.

The director bowed slightly, smiled, and bowed again. State Bank is billions rubles and hundreds of millions in foreign currency. Only these billions go with zeros in endless columns of numbers: debit-credit. To receive money is to receive a piece of paper, and issue money - give out a piece of paper. Subtract from one digital column and add to another. Arithmetic, nothing more. Issuing cash is not the business of the State Bank.

But you can't give up either. And never a cashier Pyotr Prokhorovich in his life of a million dollars did not count. And the treasurer too. And the director. That's why the director was embarrassed: unusually, this is a million count and give. Well, accept - no matter what. But give...

Didn't want to give out. Therefore, the director was looking for a reason, or just an excuse, so that money would not give. And if you have to give, so at least not now. If extradition cannot be avoided, then at least pull her away. And that needs a reason.

He thought and thought, and it dawned on him: but, perhaps, this is just a rogue!

That's why the director smiled, winked at the treasurer and politely, too politely, addressed to the visitor:

"Your check is undeniable, but maybe it's... what's his... not your check! - And no longer leaving room for notes of politeness, the director growled like a deputy head of the Kyiv garrison guardhouse:

"Give me the document, you bastard!"

- Which document? the visitor did not understand.

— Identity certifying! the director hissed like a snake under the deck.

He hissed softly, maliciously, combining in two words and hissing hatred for the swindler, deep contempt for him and great pride in his resourcefulness: this is necessary - no one in the entire State Bank I didn't think to ask the rogue for a passport!

The visitor thought for a moment, how confused he would be... The guards and cashiers perked up: Is this visitor a rogue?

But confusion slipped from his face, he smiled dazzlingly, spread his arms, again expressing both respect for the established order and the intention to strictly comply with the requirements administration. From the black polished table he took the same school notebook, raised it above with his head for all to see, tore out another blank checkered sheet with a bang and handed it director.

The director was embarrassed. The cashiers murmured: what is this coming out of? Have you seen the appeal such with the client!

But the client was not one of the touchy ones - he showed everyone with a kind smile that it was not intends that he approves of the director's vigilance, even if, showing it, the director went out slightly beyond the bounds of decency: a million dollars is not a pound of raisins for you, better in such a case be overly vigilant...

Wanting to make amends for rudeness, the director politely asked:

How can you carry such a weight?

- And I'll borrow your police guards for an hour.

2

Meeting. Huge office. High narrow window openings in walls three meters thick.

The windows are lined with white silk. From top to bottom. Like wavy clouds. The walls are covered with oak panels. Under the green cloth is a long table. Carpets are red. With a pattern. Stalin walks on carpets. A people's commissars are sitting at the table. They are sitting. Words are spoken. Discuss ways to dramatically increase ammunition production. Here, not only the People's Commissar of Ammunition has been given the task. Here The People's Commissar of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy has something to puzzle over. And the People's Commissar timber industry. If we produce a million tons more shells than last year, how many additional wooden boxes will be required? And the People's Commissar messages task: to supply metals to factories, to take out finished products from factories. And where are they to do later, these same shells?

Think, responsible comrades. Think. It is not in vain that the people nominated you to high positions.

Stalin walks along the table. behind the speakers. Caucasian boots are drowning in Asian carpets.

The step is muffled. The people's commissar speaks, puts forward a sensible proposal, but does not dare to turn around. AND I don't understand: either Stalin went into the corner on soft cat's paws, or he is standing behind his back. Stalin is silent. He doesn't interrupt anyone, he doesn't correct anyone, he doesn't reread anyone. And that could mean anything...

Every five minutes, a call. Stalin picks up the phone, listens, nods his head and hangs up without saying a word.

Today the topic of the conference is of little concern to Stalin. Called the people's commissars to a meeting so that they become witnesses, in order to triumphantly declare at six o'clock in the evening: "I invited Messer, but he did not come. He was simply not allowed into the Kremlin!"

Stalin looks at an old clock. Patterned arrows are approaching the moment when the small one will show exactly six, and the large one - exactly twelve, the arrows in this short one will time form a single straight line, splitting the dial into two halves. Phone calls — these are Holovanov's reports: Messer was not found by secret agents on the approaches to the Kremlin, did not approach the external cordon of the Kremlin, did not approach the gates, did not approach anyone through the Spassky Gates they didn't let them through, but the Borovitsky, Troitsky and Nikolsky were locked. Over the past seven hours, the Kremlin has not not a single person, not a single car missed.

Messer entered Stalin's office without knocking. Behind him are three red crazed policemen with suitcases. Messer pointed out where to put the suitcases - next to the Stalin armchair. Put. The sorcerer let them go, then he caught himself: how are they going to get out of the Kremlin now? That's why he ordered me to wait in the waiting room. Comrade Poskrebyshchev, Stalin's secretary, friendly asked to take care of the policemen, treat them: they deserved it. Poskrebyshchev nodded, ordered...

The hands of the clock stretched out in a straight line, the French mechanism played a tune, and a bronze hammer clanged on a sparkling plate: bo-o-o-m-m-m.

"He's gone!" Stalin announced.

"Who's missing?" Messer didn't understand.

4

Stalin really wanted Messer to come, to break through all the cordons, all the outposts. Stalin loved strong people, talented people, people gifted with unusual abilities. AND at the same time, Stalin did not want Messer to come. Didn't want the most powerful in human history, the security and safety system was broken by someone. Stalin was drawn to this unusual man, and at the same time, Stalin did not want to meet someone who was in some ways stronger than Stalin himself.

Messer entered Stalin's office four minutes before the appointed time, and exactly at six, in response to Stalin's victorious cry, announced that he had already arrived and was just waiting for the moment, when they pay attention. Only then did they see him. And quiet confusion pressed the conferring chairs, and each lowered his eyes, trying not to see what was happening, as if protecting himself from

of this world.

And as soon as Stalin smiled, mischievous devils jumped in his eyes, everything dirty and black in one moment, as it were, departed and lagged behind Stalin, and his whole being overflowed with a single impulse of that admiration that a Russian person can express only in short obscene exclamation.

Stalin was not Russian by birth, but, having conquered the Russians and ruling over them undividedly, I adopted mine from them, even the manner of expressing delight. He alone in all the earth knew about his system protection, because only he alone could appreciate the greatness of what Messer accomplished. Someday people will fly into space, someday they will reach the Moon, Venus and Mars, someday - Saturn and Neptune. But what will the flight of the first man into space mean in comparison with what sorcerer? Going into space would mean very little. For all mankind, it's clear it will be great holiday. But the planet will rejoice only because no one in the world, no one but Stalin, does not even approximately represent the power of the secret security system that he overcame Messer. In comparison with this, the entire previous and all future history of mankind pales. There can be no achievement higher than this. Taking a million out of the bank is nonsense. In the old days Comrade Stalin himself played the bank. With partners. Europe is amazing. A bank is a bank. But how to pass through the countless invisible chains of Stalin's guards and invincible walls?! Impossible.

Before Stalin stood a man who had done the impossible. Because Stalin approached him, embraced, walked away, shook the ashes from the pipe not into the ashtray, but past, for Messer's eyes did not let go, slammed his palm on the table, did not hold it in himself, but tinkled and banged with the very phrase the only possible in this case for the correct assessment of the committed:

— Wow, damn it!

5

In the Spanish group - a lesson in survival. Each has its own start point and finish point. For the newcomer, start in Yakhroma, finish in Naro-Fominsk. There is one checkpoint on the route: Moscow, Red Square, monument to Minin and Pozharsky. It is necessary to put a bouquet to the base colors. From start to finish, you can use any type of transport: fly by plane, jump on a horse, ride a bicycle or ride on a stick. As you like. But, as always, each starts without weapons, without money, without documents. And in order to give the lesson realism, the Moscow police and units of the NKVD were notified of the escape from Dmitlag of a particularly dangerous sadistic criminal who she squanders cards and cuts with razors, and her signs are reported to whom she follows. It can be assumed that if the militiamen come across a girl, then they may not kill her on the spot, - just raped, beaten, mutilated and the report will be sent victorious: The ninth police department of the city

Moscow...

It is clear that this will be followed by expulsion from the group, but what after that is unknown. Because

- It's better not to get caught. Therefore, one must pass through Moscow as a shadow, pass as a ghost, pass in such a way that did not notice.

And, like all previous lessons, this one is complicated by the fact that you need to think not only about speed and direction of travel, not only about their safety, but also about something else. This other is set on start: an essay on the topic "Why it is necessary to exterminate kings, kings and emperors." Having passed route, it will be necessary not to fall into the grass, not to grab water in large sips, but to write. At the finish line hands will tremble, thoughts will be confused, and eyes will stick together, and the time for composing is thirty minutes. Act as you like: you can brainstorm and write everything along the way. In general, to each his own making a choice...

6

Why did you come to my country? Stalin asked quietly, as soon as the door closed behind him.
the last one to meet.

- You called me.

"I hunted you, I sent people...

"Everyone is after me: Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt. And you too. In Berlin I was met by two American. But I understood: they work for you. I just saw your pipe behind them. And mustache. your I sent out the messengers. But before that... you called me. I heard your call.

- Right. I called you.

- For what?

"You, Messer, will serve me.

"I will not serve you.

- Why?

- I'm stronger than you. You, Stalin, are weaker. The strong subdue the weak, not vice versa.

"You, Messer, have shown me your strength, but you have not yet seen my strength. Now it's my time. Now it's my turn to show strength. Sit down, - Stalin ordered.

- I'll stand.

"Sit down," Stalin repeated.

- I'll stand.

It happened to you too, as it happened to me: you accidentally rest your gaze on someone's eyes unfamiliar and at first you don't want to give in as a joke. Then you get angry, then, without blinking, you press with a glance: submit! Peepers, bastard, blink! Avert your shameless eyes! Put them down lascivious! Cover your eyelashes! You are weaker than me! Blink, bastard, otherwise I will strangle with a glance!

So Stalin and Messer seemed to start as a joke, but then both, like wolves, have scruffs ruffled:

- Sit down!
- I'll stand!

Stalin suddenly felt like a little man. In a cage with a rabid tiger. Only firefighters with fire hoses secure the trainer. Only the trainer has a revolver behind the belt and a steel pin in the hand: in case of complications, stab into the tiger's mouth. And with a friend Stalin - no firefighters with hoses, no revolver, no steel pin. Dry mouth. That dryness of the mouth drained, which does not allow to speak. Which words do not allow to utter. Stalin exhaled. He lowered his eyes. And suddenly he turned all around to Messer and quietly either commanded, or asked:

- Sit down.

7

This is what happens in a circus: a tiger goes berserk. I got mad during the performance. And then options are possible. First: firemen blink, they will hit the recalcitrant with water jets. All hit together. From different sides. They will strike so that it will be disrespectful to rebel. Only after that tiger the rebel from the circus troupe will have to be written off to the zoo. You can't work with this anymore.

And the second option: tame. Find out relationships. Force to obey. To the trainer right in the arena, having driven out all the other animals, it is necessary to tame one recalcitrant beast. That's what the profession is called: tamer! Here, work. Tame.

Therefore, having forgotten everything, therefore, having despised the most venerable public, it is necessary for the tamer to gather his will into burning dot and command the beast to follow orders. The beast will roar. Beast on the blows of the scourge fangs pop out. And foam from the mouth. And the fangs are yellow. And the eyes are cannibalistic. And, clinging to the grate, hissing with anger, he suddenly rushes at the hated person ...

He is not a steel pin, not a gypsy whip, he must be stopped with a look. Humble yourself! Recognize power over yourself!

Ten minutes of relaxation. Twenty! Man and beast. One on one. Thirty minutes! breasted against him! With a look! Calm down, beast! Submit! I am stronger than you! The main thing here: life is not cherish. Why is she life? To hell with her, with life, if only to show the place to the beast. Just to show thirsty for blood: I am not afraid of your fangs. I'm not afraid of claws. Humble yourself!

And the audience will appreciate the victory. And the grateful spectator will roar with a victorious roar, more terrible a rabid tiger will roar. And the spectator's palm will be kicked off for the glory of the winner. And then the floor break through. After. When the beast submits. When the beast, growling and snarling, will reluctantly execute the order: alright...

When Stalin appeared, everyone always got up for some reason. Make anyone stand up appearance is not a problem. In order to force you to stand up, Stalin did not even apply any efforts. They got up on their own. All.

Now it was not a question of getting up - that would be easy - now it was necessary make the sorcerer sit down.

There were no spectators in the Kremlin office. Not the Moscow circus here on Tsvetnoy Boulevard. Here a huge deaf office between indestructible walls. Colosseum without spectators. Taming of the Shrew.

There is no one here to yell, out of delight. One on one. What remains between them is whether Stalin asked

whether he commanded:

- Sit down.

CHAPTER 15

1

And Messer sat down. Then Stalin, consolidating success, quite quietly:

- Do you see the map?

- I see the map.

- Red - Soviet Union.

- I know.

"Now look again: now everything on the map is red, all the continents.

Messer does not believe himself: for sure - all of a sudden the continents on the map became blood-red.

Messer screwed up his eyes and opened them again: damn this Kremlin and its inhabitants, there can be no

like that, but all countries are red. As Stalin said, it is so: there were just continents on the map

multi-colored, like a patchwork quilt, and here - a single color. Colors of blood spilled in battles.

Do you believe in my power?

— I believe. You are stronger than me, Stalin. Let go.

- I'm letting go.

Immediately, all the continents on the map were decorated with colorful patches. One

only the Soviet Union, as it should be, remained red. Miracles.

Messer has never met a man stronger than himself in this world. And so I met. Recognized strength. A

I did not know how to express admiration for someone else's strength. Therefore, he only waved his hand, nodded his head and

Russian manner spoke briefly:

— Wow, damn it!

2

The police returned to the bank accompanied by a doctor and two orderlies. "Ambulance"

the central entrance froze in readiness, in anticipation. Rudolf Messer was prudent -

knew how the tricks ended, therefore, together with the policemen and a million, he also sent

"Ambulance".

The cashier Pyotr Prokhorovich did not understand why they returned a million to him: he gave out a million, received the correct paper in return, what's the matter? Here it is, paper. On the spot. And it's all on paper

Right. The cashier jabbed his finger into a clean piece of notebook paper, broke off, looked closely, was surprised,

he choked, stuttered, wheezed, bit his blue lips, rolled his eyes, slid down from his chair. Here it is

taken by the paramedics.

Forethought is a great thing.

If you engage in sorcery, do not forget to assign a doctor with orderlies to the victims.

Mercy beautifies.

3

If you decide that Stalin was a sorcerer, then I will disappoint you. This, of course, is not true. Comrade Stalin was not a sorcerer, he did not possess a magical gift.

He was a tamer of sorcerers.

4

A grubby ragged boy pulled a crumpled bunch of lilies of the valley out of his sleeve and put it on red granite right under the inscription: "Grateful to Citizen Minin and Prince Pozharsky Russia, summer 1818. A handsome, trim policeman slapped him gently on the neck: "Get out of your seat, I'll take the eggs right now."

The grubby one only grunted impudently, but accepted the advice - he did not linger on Red Square.

A white bouquet of lilies of the valley is the seventh on sparkling granite. Before someone filled up the foot pedestal with luxurious bouquets.

The policeman marveled: is it a holiday today? In the square near the cathedral I got up from the bench a huge man in a leather coat, folded up a newspaper, put it in a pot-bellied stone urn - cultured. The policeman was stunned: the man is right from the newspaper page, the famous pilot, or Valery Chkalov, not the Stalinist pilot Alexander Kholovanov himself. The policeman stretched out, palm under visor. The leather one answered the greeting, went to the lonely car: the brand new one was the last one again. The checkpoint is only half the way, she still has to pass the second half, do not run into, do not fall asleep, and write an essay. Might be late for the finish line. But it's not scary: she's not in main composition.

5

Why did Messer earn money by the hard work of a circus magician, if he could just take in any bank exactly as much as he needed? And anyway, why does he need money, if could have everything he wanted without money? Why did he demonstrate to the whole world his unusual abilities, if it was possible to live quietly, without stretching your neck over the crowd, and do what like? And why did he not strive for power, although he could control any crowds? Why Messer came to the Soviet Union? Why not to America?

I don't have answers to all these questions. I don't know. I only know that all over the world is a sorcerer Rudolf Messer respected one person - Stalin. After taming, I began to respect even more ...

After that meeting in the Kremlin, having shown his strength and feeling Stalin's, the sorcerer Rudolf

Messer became Stalin's friend, perhaps his only friend. Stalin had no other friends.

There were drinking companions, there were rivals, there were associates, there were students and subordinates. And friends...

And here he appeared.

Maybe Stalin lacked someone to whom he could pour out his soul? Maybe you needed someone with whom not should I be lying? Maybe Stalin needed a person next to him who had almost the same the ability to manage people, like Stalin himself, but not eager for power?

And right away it happened to them: in the presence of strangers - on "you", and together on "you" to each other. contact a friend. As usual in the wizarding world. I also know that Messer immediately revealed to Stalin his weakness: he was afraid of dogs, Rottweilers. In the presence of a Rottweiler, he could not work. (Messer did not speak in a high style: hypnotize, enchant, conjure, he simply spoke - to work.)

Why Messer revealed his weakness to Stalin, I also do not understand. Can you understand them, sorcerers?

I never told anyone, but take it to Stalin and open up.

At the very first meeting.

"Strange," said Comrade Stalin. - Such a person, and is afraid of dogs. Strange. And I, you know I'm not afraid of anyone. Nobody but people.

6

But I don't understand Stalin either: the Kremlin walls are up to six and a half meters thick, height up to nineteen and are vigilantly guarded, and even if there was one person in the world who is able to pass through such walls, then just in case against this person - you never know what? — it was necessary in the Kremlin and in Stalin's dachas to start at least two or three hundred of these same rottweilers. So no. Comrade Stalin did not order to strengthen the guards with Rottweilers. Vice versa, ordered to remove all Rottweilers from the Kremlin guard, if there were any.

If anyone can explain to me Stalin's act - explain, I'm in this case I absolutely do not understand Stalinist logic.

7

Every secret operation must have a code word. For example: Thunderstorm.

Walking officers at the headquarters, they say. About something.

"According to the Thunderstorm...

- To prepare "Thunderstorm" ...

- At the second stage of the "Thunderstorm" it will be necessary ...

Guess what it's about. Well, if the scope of the operation speaks for itself:

- For the "Thunderstorm" you need to move a couple of million tons of ammunition to the area known to you ...

Or:

- Three months before the start of the Thunderstorm, 310 thousand officers need to be released from military schools

according to plan and another 70 thousand ahead of schedule ...

When we talk about such scales, you can guess. Yes, but not everyone has such conversations. hears. Usually everything is from fragments, from fragments:

- Ten thousand tons of coal and six thousand tons of rails must be urgently transferred to Brest.

The "storm" is coming.

So it is in any secret business - from the very beginning, even at the stage of conception, a single word or even a few letters that cover everything. Who keep a secret...

So that the designers of the anti-tank rifle and the designers of the armor-piercing cartridge, testers and snipers did not repeat each time the essence of the matter, even in the most secret conversation, the order came out: to call this thing the abbreviation "SA". And nothing else.

- Tomorrow we need to establish the excess of the SA trajectory over the aiming line.
- Full range?
- Yes. Full range.

And that's it. Go outsider figure out what it's about.

CHAPTER 16

1

This is a difficult thing - fine-tuning. It is easy to carve a sculpture with a chisel. Sanding is difficult. So and any weapon, and indeed any mechanism and machine, is easy to make, then it's difficult to get it to condition bring.

Makar is a special film mechanic days and nights on the special stage. There is a refinement of the miracle weapon with the incomprehensible name "SA". With this weapon, the valiant Stalinist intelligence will mercilessly smash theoretically inaccessible enemies. True, the designers are not supposed to know this either. The imprisoned designers were tasked with achieving such and such accuracy at such a range. And who needs such a range? And for what? Let the tank get closer and hit for sure. Why is it on such a range to beat, if it is not dangerous to you?

So, debugging. Weapon designers and ammunition designers fuss, and different optics need to try out. Choose the best. Then you need to mark the sights - that's where the trouble is! It has been established that it is necessary to shoot only from the machine, direct only with the help of screws, otherwise any movement of the shooter, the slightest breath displace the barrel. The displacement is minimal, it is generally can't be fixed with any device. but at a distance of four kilometers, the deviation is obtained unacceptable. It is necessary to beat in the head so as not to spoil the skin, and the enemy's head all the time spinning. The sniper's heart must beat in time with the heart of the target. This beat needs to be felt. The sniper must anticipate all movements of the target, and his weapon must not follow the target, but to get ahead of her movements. If the victim is dancing, then the sniper's barrel must also dance along with target, anticipating every movement for seconds so that the bullet has time to fly, for so that the sent bullet meets the head of the enemy and pierces it between the eyes, tearing the skull into fragments. Shooting from a light sniper rifle for a kilometer or two, you can easily guess movement of the target and slightly drive the barrel, accompanying and slightly ahead of it. But how to direct a huge heavy anti-tank gun with screws? We need to come up with something else. Because experiments are ongoing. Because shots rumble over the special stage, distorted special silencers.

Between test snipers, the competition is unofficial. Maybe someone will guess? By the gold coins were dropped - the one who comes up with the best decoding for the abbreviation will get it "SA".

Satan the Antichrist...

— Steel Crossbow...

- Stalinist ... What is Stalinist?

2

It has been established so long ago: at any special stage there is a rest house for performers, with a river, with beach, with good cuisine and a good cook, right there is a shooting range so that the Stalinist shooters don't lose your uniform, there's a firing point right there - people behind the fence hear the shooting, they know: they have a shooting range there, they train. Of course, experiments are also best on special stages conduct. Especially if the experiment simultaneously includes accurate shooting at a huge distance, and shooting. After all, it doesn't matter to those who are shot how they are shot - in the back of the head from pistol or from four kilometers from an anti-tank rifle. A shooting is a shooting. From guns are even better. And the shooters practice, and the one who is shot is an easy death, sudden, without a long preparation before death, without all these execution preparations.

Good death when you do not expect it. When you don't suspect her. They bring you to the beautiful shore of the White Lake and let them into an empty cottage on the shore. Boss' dacha, no one here won't get in. But running away won't work either. Walk alone, wander, wonder at the vicissitudes of fate: yesterday at death chamber on the bunk, today - in a luxurious dacha. And no one around. Only clouds across the sky, yeah the wind in the trees is noisy. Christmas trees on the White Lake thirty meters into the sky. Hills around. Also forests impassable delayed. Only at the dacha of a lonely forest was cut down. And the dacha is fenced so that an intruder cannot get into it, and the one who is in it cannot escape without permission. Here you sit enjoy the view. You can swim, but you won't be able to swim far — there is a steel net. Can sit on the shore. Somebody's hand left here foreign magazines with enticing pictures. You can drink coffee. Real Spanish Espresso. I haven't dabbled like this for a long time, a former citizen boss? That's it. Sit at a table on the beach, enjoy.

Then your head - one! and break into small pieces. But you, citizen prisoner, you won't be able to notice it.

Then another former boss will be sent here. He will also walk along the shore, wonder.

Today it was the turn of the surprised Chekist, the former head of the Amur logging camps s / to Yarygin. They brought him from the death chamber to the forest, washed him, fed him, dressed in a suit with a tie, they left one.

3

"But you, Messer, are a monarchist.

Are you reading my mind again?

— No, Messer, it's just that my people carefully collected and analyzed your statements.

"But you, Stalin, are a monarchist. A man who conquered a great country cannot not be monarchist, cannot believe in the wisdom of the crowd.

- Can not.

"Socialism is nothing but the extreme expression of the monarchist idea, for which the revolution was the accelerating phase." So said...

- So said the great Gustave le Bon.

- Crowd Psychology. I love Gustav.

- And I.

Are you a monarch?

- Secret.

And the crowd doesn't know about it?

- As you see. Everyone considers me the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. By mistake.

"Will you expand your dominions, Comrade Monarch?"

- You can't do it without it.

"And destroy monarchies in your path?"

- Will. And not only monarchies, but also republics. They are all rotten through and through.

"And instead, new monarchies?"

It will be called people's democracy.

- But in principle - the monarchy?

- Yes. The power of one.

- So why not name those who will destroy the old monarchs and take their places

kings, kings, emperors?

- What you, Messer, you understand, impatient. It's bad for propaganda.

Why announce it? Let the titles be secret...

I don't know what Stalin and Messer talked about during the long nights. And why do we need to know? Book then we have not about Stalin and not about Messer, but about that spare girl from the Spanish group.

And I have absolutely nothing to tell about Stalin and his magician friend. It is only known that early

On a hazy morning, Stalin sees off his guest, shaking his hand:

- Will you help me?

- I'll help. Only on condition...

— I know your condition: to call the future rulers of the planet kings. So?

4

Stalin does not sleep at night. He falls asleep at dawn. Today he had a sleepless dawn.

Soldier bed. Gray blanket: three blue stripes there and three blue ones here. Under the covers - Stalin.

Looks at the ceiling, closes his eyes, sleep beckons. But a dream, like a free bird, flutters nearby, to catch does not give himself. And then Stalin opens his eyes again and looks at the ceiling again.

The question of power is resolved: he chose himself, gnawed ten million throats and thus proved that his choice is the only right one. Now we have to liberate Europe, Asia, Africa. When someday all the countries of the world will find the only possible method of choosing leaders: each one himself chooses. But now, for the first years and decades, for all the countries to be liberated, leaders must be prepared. These leaders will not be chosen by the crowd in appearance, they will be raised and choose a wise good ruler. He will choose not by appearance, but by business qualities ... A wise ruler is already preparing leaders, leaders, leaders for Europe, for Asia, for Africa ... Then he will prepare leaders for America too...

Even in the world to come, the stupid crowd entertains itself with a fairy tale that the power belongs to to her. Singles will rule. Specially grown for this. Will rule under the name crowds. Let's call it democracy. The highest form of democracy.

Stalin found answers to almost all questions of life long ago. Just now a long sleepless in the morning he once again builds for himself a chain of logical proofs of his innocence. The iron Stalinist logic brings the reasoning almost to the very end ... Almost. Doubts remained in the last question... About the form of power. There are no questions about the content, but the forms can be two. First, let there be a General Secretary of the Communist Party in every country, to he will have to assign a second secretary ...

In Spain, for example, the Secretary General will, of course, be a fiery unbending Dolores Ibarruri. Who else? But the second secretary for her must be found. Grow and put on. In Bulgaria Comrade Dimitrov will be General Secretary. And the second secretary is needed will prepare. There is a good girl in the Bulgarian group... In Poland, the General Secretary... Whom in Poland? Isn't it just one devil, who should be appointed General? He is not the main one ... Second secretaries... Put only the one who tasted blood. Who killed the previous leader himself ... The fighters of the special groups will go through the school of a real struggle for power. They will personally destroy rulers of the liberated countries and after that they will take their place ...

Second Secretaries...

Or is it the kings? Managing tens and hundreds of millions is hellish work. Worse than this come up with. The one who manages should be rewarded for his work. From each ability, to each according to his work. But how to combine? How not to scare away the crowd? You can combine. Let the rulers be called second secretaries. Officially. Bye. And secretly let them be called real name ... Sometime later it will be possible to bring the form in line with the content ... They canceled the money. Because money is not good. Everything is evil from money. Instead of money introduced "Soviet signs". You can't do without it. But it is difficult to pronounce this, therefore it is very logical instead of tricky Soviet signs to call the damned papers money. And the orders were cancelled. To equality it was lest one should boast before another. And it is right. But the best should be celebrated, and

then they introduced the insignia, which they called the order. And the ministers were canceled because equality must triumph. That's right, they canceled it. Instead of ministers, people's commissars were introduced - people's commissars. But to make it sound better, it will be necessary to turn people's commissars into ministers. And that is undignified somehow. And the ambassadors were cancelled. Instead of them - plenipotentiaries. And there are no officers - red commanders instead them. There are no generals. But how without them? How without stripes and gold shoulder straps? Without ambassadors and ministers? How without a king? From a brown angular safe Stalin took out an envelope sealed with five seals, looked out the window at the tops of the fir trees, threw the envelope into the blazing fireplace. He prepared gema essays for all who are preparing for the difficult work of managing millions. After much deliberation, I decided to change the topic. From a neat pile he took a blank sheet, grinned, wrote something with a thick blue pencil, folded the sheet, put it in an envelope ...

5

In the Spanish group, the last composition. Today there will be no difficulties: sit, write. Six o'clock. Each has two notebooks. All notebooks are marked "Top Secret". Pages numbered. Each notebook at the spine is stitched with two threads, threads on the last page tied with a knot, and the knot is closed with the seal of the Institute of the World Revolution. You can't tear out the leaf. One notebook is a draft. The second is the main work. Both notebooks are subject to verification. Draft may be more important than the main job. The verifier needs to delve into the train of thought writers...

The girls opened their notebooks and froze. Deputy Director of the World Revolution Institute Comrade Kholovanov broke the seals on the gray envelope stitched with red thread and pulled out a sheet:

- Essay topic...

Kholovanov ran his eyes, did not believe it, choked, choked, coughed, just like cashier at the State Bank, but controlled himself, exhaled noisily, announced in a strange voice:

- The theme of the composition: "If I were a queen."

6

Night. Sleeping country. Stalin does not sleep. He does not sleep at night at all, he protects the peace of the country. How permanent sentry. Comrade Stalin has a lot to do. Today he checks his essays. Relishes. Girls - well done, you read - the soul rejoices. And the grammar is all right, and clean, and the handwriting is everyone is a role model. Drafts are a pleasure to read, and as soon as you open a clean copy, then and it is difficult to break away, like Pushkin himself wrote. Because Moscow is sleeping, and Comrade Stalin awake and rejoices: smart girls, and nothing more. He ordered himself to read essays, but not to read names of writers. He decided to recognize each by style, by manner of presentation, moreover, by way of thinking...

Problem: which essay should I give preference to?

Stalin completed the work. Put the last marks: five for the presentation of the material, five for grammar. He pushed a stack of notebooks aside. Yawned, stretched. And he caught on. stack towards you rushed. And without counting the notebooks, he poured himself overflowing with a soft affectionate tiger ferocity, rage without external manifestations:

- Kholovanova to me.

7

For some reason, Stalin decided in advance that there were not enough two notebooks in the pile. And he knew whose. Six excellent essays and six drafts. Everything is right, everything is wonderful. But from that one, from the last one, from spare, for some reason he did not expect an exemplary essay. For some reason he was waiting for some step unusual, which breaks out of the frame.

Where is this oddity? I counted the notebooks: ... ten, eleven, twelve. Six compositions, six drafts, and what did the seventh do?

CHAPTER 17

1

Allow me, Comrade Stalin?

Stalin did not seem to notice the newcomer. Silent. He didn't yell at anyone. Never. IN anger, he turns away, walks, looks out the window or at his feet, fiddles with his pipe, smokes her. To extinguish and hide the outward manifestations of anger... But Kholovanov knows that means Stalin's focus on punching a hole in the mouthpiece. Kholovanov appreciated situation instantly. He realized he was wrong. It was necessary to immediately report how it was ... Now (and he knows that) the only way to salvation is not to make excuses. Because Stalin is silent, sniffs, blows a hole, again picks the pipe with a special awl and blows it again.

And Holovanov is silent.

For a long time the tube could not be cleaned. But everything comes to an end. Stalin hung up right pocket of the jacket, and then only turned a surprised look at Kholovanov: oh, you are here, I don't noticed.

And Kholovanov supported the game, exposing himself as guilty, pretended that he entered without permission and now asks:

- Allow me, Comrade Stalin?

- Yes, come in. I summoned you on this matter, comrade Kholovanov. I care state of affairs in the Swedish group.

And this trick is known to Kholovanov: Stalin had already suppressed his outburst of anger, but at the first words it might flare up again. Because he starts from afar, to calm not only his own devilish brain, but also his speech.

- Comrade Stalin, I think there is no reason to worry about the state of affairs in the Swedish group.

There are problems, there are breakdowns, but everything is within the framework of the correctable and removable, within the framework of the normal working rhythm...

What about our Greeks?

- In the Greek group, everything is normal, I consider it necessary to expel only one girl for breach of discipline.

- What's happened?

- Unauthorized withdrawal.

— Duration?

- Forty-six minutes.

Expel and take steps to maintain secrecy.

"Measures to maintain secrecy have been taken, the execution material is ready, I will present it tomorrow.

- Fine. Go... No, wait. There is another question...

Here it is... Holovanov shrank back. Shriveled internally. Outwardly, he is carelessness itself: what else is there?

- There should be fourteen notebooks with the compositions of the Spanish group.

— Thirteen, Comrade Stalin. She didn't use the blueprint.

Kholovanov tries to speak as Stalin says: with the utmost clarity, with the utmost clarity,

saving words and time. Therefore, for the sake of economy, he did not name the one that was not a draft

used, for brevity, designating everything with a pronoun. For some reason, talking about her, he thought that

no explanation required. For some reason, he thought that you can talk about her without naming her name -

Comrade Stalin already knows who he is talking about, he knows who is capable of such liberties.

Indeed, Stalin did not notice that the name of the one who, contrary to the established order

did not use the draft, not yet named. It's about her. And it's clear to both.

- Well, comrade Kholovanov, let's say she didn't use a draft, then notebooks

should be thirteen. Where is the thirteenth notebook?

— Comrade Stalin, she did not cope with the task. Her writing is unsatisfactory.

- I'll decide. Where is the notebook?

2

And Holovanov realized that he was saved. Having received an urgent night call to the Kremlin, he

I remembered a thousand cases, a hundred thousand questions to which Stalin could demand an immediate answer.

Go and figure out why Stalin calls at three in the morning, go and remember thousands of your subordinates and a lot of

cunning combinations, in which everyone is involved by Stalin's will. Choose from thousands of cases

the only thing you need at the moment ... He opened a huge safe with documents of the category

"Top secret. Of special importance," he glanced at him and locked the safe again. Opened the second

top secret documents. Slipped again from top to bottom through thousands of folders.

He snatched out the absurd girl's notebook with an essay on the topic "If I were a queen", locked the safe,

sealed both with his personal seal and rushed to the Kremlin.

Now, when Stalin held out his hand demanding and sternly asked: "Where is the notebook?", Kholovanov

simply put his hand into the briefcase and, like a great sorcerer, pulled out the only thing in it

was, the only thing that was required: here it is.

He knew: if there were no notebooks with him, Stalin would not accept any explanations and wait until

notebook will bring, will not. In this situation, Holovanov was expected to be arrested at the exit and shot at

dawn.

It worked out.

3

Stalin took the notebook somehow carefully, somehow carefully, like a great master picks up the work of a favorite student: well, let's see. He walked away with the notebook to the window, as if turning towards the light of the searchlight outside the window, at the same time turning away from Kholovanov.

He flipped through the blank sheets impatiently, beginning with the last one, knowing in advance that almost all they are clean, that one first page was enough for her. But you have to make sure. Yes, she's had enough one page. One offer. Stretching the pleasure, Stalin missed two moments before reading what is written.

I read it. And beamed. He never showed his feelings to anyone. And now he's not without reason turned away from Holovanov. He expected a surprise, but didn't know what it was. He didn't want to show his reaction. And he thought: he did not show. But Holovanov, seeing only Stalin's back, suddenly understood: shines.

4

And they picked up those snipers. Girls. If a bullet weighing 64 grams went forward with a speed 1012 meters per second, then a recoil of the same force will hit the shoulder of the shooter. Well, let's guess.

In the butt, a shock absorber is arranged, but all the same, recoil can break the collarbone. press down the butt to the shoulder is necessary so that there is no gap so that the shoulder together with the butt simultaneously back would fly off, but would not meet a blow. And shooters need to put hefty men, two hundred kilograms. And some fool puts light-weight piss on this business. Eh, darkness!

The SA weapons system is being fine-tuned. And nearby, a hundred meters away, they are already preparing shooters.

Makar is surprised: why are the girls in this business? And one seemed familiar to him. thin, eyes - like your dragonfly. Her recoil of a shot almost throws her back a meter, she is clearly all in bruised from the recoil, but you can't drag her away from the gun. It squeals with pleasure.

5

The mirror door closed. Seven girls in a large round hall. Walls are solid mirror field. From the ceiling - a stream of light. Everything sparkles and shimmers. Only the door breaks sparkling uniformity. But the door was closed. The mirror circle is closed. Now it's even hard figure out where it is, the door.

Training is exactly one hour. A musical signal will sound: ding-dong-dong, and from now on imagine yourself as a queen or queen.

More recently, here, in the hall of mirrors, each had to represent herself as the second Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party. Officially, the fraternal parties are ruled by the first secretaries from local comrades, but in reality second secretaries, appointed by Moscow, rule. Here are them-

then the girls here, in the hall of mirrors, portrayed. Each is an actress, and at the same time each for the rest are the spectator and the judge. No grades are given for this lesson - it is clear to everyone without grades that she stands out against the background of others.

Now everything is the same as last time, but for some reason someone changed the program preparation, now it is necessary to play the role not of the second secretary, but the role of the queen or queen. And not think that it is so simple - to make a queen out of yourself for an hour. Don't think there's a role to play the queen is easier than the role of the second secretary. It is clear that no queen had so much power, how much the second secretary of the fraternal communist party, and yet play the role of queen or queens is not at all as simple as it might seem from the outside.

The task is also complicated by the fact that there is not one queen in the hall, but seven at once.

However, the seventh already, as it were, does not count. She should be kicked out of the group soon. Doesn't get along spare in the team, does not fit. Everything is in her own way. Everything is wrong with her. Recently essay wrote "If only I were a queen." Comrade Holovanov announced the topic, everything is just draft notebooks opened, and she, having heard the topic, did not even open the draft notebook, immediately scribbled something in the main notebooks, threw Holovanov on the table and went out.

And now the signal sounded, all the majestic poses were taken, only she contemptuously she grinned and showed with her appearance that she did not intend to take part in this game.

Not to say that the newcomer did not want to be a queen. I wanted to. And even very much. But she wanted to be a real queen, not a mummer one. She hated to pretend to be a queen. Some inner strength restrained her, did not allow to pretend. There is no corner in the hall of mirrors - round hall, but one chair is still aloof from the others. Luxurious armchair, clearly from Louis' boudoir Thirteenth. It was in this chair that she sat down, propped her cheek on her hand and looked at her majestic girlfriends, expressing neither interest, nor approval, nor censure. She just contemplates what is happening with full understanding that she didn't fit into the team, that now they won't forgive her, now she's out of groups will be kicked out.

6

The signal sounded: ding-dong-dong. The mirror door opened: the lesson is over, come out. Immediately the girls from queens and queens turned into our native Soviet Komsomol girls, tweeted on a fashionable topic about the new film "Peter the Great". For some reason, before all the films were about revolutionary fighters: about Chapaev, about Shchors, about Kirov, about Lenin, and now suddenly very interesting films about hetmans, princes, tsars and emperors: about Alexander Nevsky, about Bogdan Khmelnytsky, or about Peter. They say that there will be about Ivan the Terrible ...

At the exit - as is customary: the main team goes forward, then the spare.

In the mirrored door, the spare turned into an empty hall and grinned into space: breaking

comedy is not for me.

7

The day has died down - worse than ever. And the night passed like this - you will not envy. Time to sleep. By On Stalin's personal order, Kholovanov-Dragon is obliged to sleep at least four hours every day. Time has gone. But the Dragon can't sleep. Eyes - in the ceiling of the monastery.

In recent days he has ceased to understand Stalin. This is worrying. For many years he avoided blows of fate only because he understood Stalin's logic, because he knew in advance why Stalin will praise, for which - shoot.

But this girl appeared in the Spanish group, and everything lost its logic. During the lesson on she came to the finish line last, but for some reason Stalin was not at all interested in this. All the girls managed to carry a large bouquet, but for some reason he liked the small one a bouquet of lilies of the valley, which she carried in her sleeve to Red Square. For some reason he wanted take control yourself. From a long black car, behind a velvet curtain, I looked... during the last shooting for four kilometers, she did not hit the head of the condemned, an armor-piercing bullet passed lower, tearing through the chest and shoulders. But Stalin paid no attention to this either; for some reason he liked her enthusiasm, he was very close by, invisible, in a boarded-up booth, and for some reason, he was not interested in the results, but in the emotions of the shooters. With the essay she disgraced - three words in total, thirteen letters. Is this an essay? And for some reason Stalin shone from this, sorry, essays.

And today the three of us looked through a transparent mirror. All girls follow the order: queens portray, and it turns out great - what gestures, what facial expressions! Only she can portray the queen failed. And didn't try. Defiantly. With a challenge. And leaving, suddenly splashed haughty looking straight to where Stalin stood behind the mirror. Whether I guessed, or I felt ... She cast her gaze like a stone. Comrade Stalin recoiled behind the mirror.

"Character," Holovanov chuckled.

- Drive this one, - Messer chopped off. And Comrade Stalin shook his head, smiled slightly in his mustache:
- What, you know, there are girls in Russian villages.

CHAPTER 18

1

She didn't fit into the group. This is clear to everyone. First of all, it is clear to her. She understands that They won't keep her here anymore. That's why it's on the road. No one has given her orders yet. She herself ordered. Fees are not debts. She has a long-standing rule: everything must fit in one green soldier's shoulder bag. Everything that does not fit is superfluous, all this must be thrown away. But she has nothing to throw away. She doesn't have anything extra with her. And another rule: in the bag - only what you can lose. What cannot be lost is on yourself. Therefore, the portrait of Comrade Stalin was removed from the wall - and breast pocket. Komsomol ticket and identity card - in the inner pocket hiding place. Overcoat - from a carnation. She tightened her tunic with a wide commander's belt. "Parabellum" - in a holster. Two orders of Lenin - on the chest.

The girls fell silent at once: no one in the group had two orders, but she had two. Yes, what! And silent, infection. However, the orders will not help. She has no place in this group. Even with medals. Even among the spares. But where did she manage to get such orders?

Here and Holovanov at the door:

— Ready? Goodbye. You are no longer in the group.

2

Any good committee has three people. So it happened: to drink, so for three. And not at all in vain in the famous picture of heroes, there are also three. And there are three in the tribunal. And in any execution commissions - again, three. It is clear that in the commission for the approval of the applicant for the position Queen of Spain triumvirate: director of the Institute of the World Revolution Comrade Stalin, his non-staff consultant comrade Messer and deputy director comrade Kholovanov.

Discussion.

Meetings with Comrade Stalin follow the pattern of classical military councils - the first the junior in position, rank and position speaks, then opinions are expressed more and more dignitaries, and the most important person speaks last. If you do the opposite, if the most the chief will express his opinion first, then the subordinates will be the opinion of the bosses keep in mind and their opinion with the authorities to conform and measure, or even the nose will be to keep in the wind, to agree, to praise the chief for wisdom and agree with him. What's the point then from the meeting?

Distributed as follows: Comrade Stalin - the most important. There was no debate on this issue. Holovanov was recognized as the second in position: he has an official position. Messer is the third

because without a position, as a free consultant. Because he has the first word.

"Comrades," he began, involuntarily joining the generally accepted manner of addressing meeting of such a high level - in the Spanish group there are six core members and one spare. We removed the spare from the group due to obvious incompatibility. Of the six applicants the main squad and one spare, the best, in my opinion, is the spare. It seems to me the rest should be immediately weeded out - not because they are ill-prepared, but because the spare is endowed with some kind of internal strength. I can't explain it in words, but this power feel. And if we are discussing today the candidacy of the future Queen of Spain, then we are discussing only one candidate. The rest are dropped without discussion.

"I agree," Holovanov nodded.

"I agree," Stalin nodded.

"So," Messer continues, "we filtered out six. Now it remains to be decided should the remaining seventh, reserve, be appointed to the post of Queen of Spain? My opinion, Comrades, you can't.

3

Makar dreamed of a girl with big blue eyes. She dreams of him every night. And in the afternoon when no one is around, he pulls out that hilarious movie and plays it for himself. Who was she? Why was she shot? I wonder if it fell to Makar to shoot her, then ...

4

- She's unusual. She is not like everyone else. And if the level of others can be expressed on a graph horizontal line, then it will be a vertical on this chart: in some ways it is immeasurably worse everyone in the group, but in some ways immeasurably better. In other words, she is from another dimension. On against her background, other contenders faded like stars at dawn, their candidacies cannot even be discussed I want to. However, our applicant is too wayward, too obstinate. I'm afraid that, seizing power, gaining control of Spain, seizing power, she will immediately withdraw from under control.

"What do you think, comrade Kholovanov?"

"I don't know, Comrade Stalin. Recruit a new group? Again from three thousand candidates to choose only six... And cook again? And then at the same table we will discuss, remember our spare and again we will disperse the new composition simply because another such contender for the throne we can't find it, it will still eclipse everyone else. On the other hand, her character is familiar to me - she stubborn and unpredictable. The danger of getting out of control is great... I don't know...

5

She does not know that they are arguing about her now. She is sleeping. For the first time in many days, there is nothing in her program. No. Therefore, she sleeps for the previous lack of sleep. Asleep for the future - who knows when they will raise, to what case will be sent.

In a dream, she immediately goes back to her distant childhood, to Serebryany Bor, to a country town of higher education. commanders of the Red Army. She is alone in a large log house with a high porch and carved platbands. In the yard on a long chain, the terrible dog Robespierre is a thunderstorm of postmen, gardeners, guests. The dog flies from one end of the yard to the other, and behind him whistles a chain on a steel wire: shshik!

It is not recommended for anyone to get into the zone where his fangs can reach. There may enter only the owner.

Nastenka is alone on the porch. Someone is digging under the fence. This is a different dog. Neighborhood. White fluffy husky with blue eyes...

6

"Comrades, I like her. Oh, what an essay she wrote! Made it to thirty seconds. In one sentence. In three words. Thirteen letters ... And how did she behave in the mirror room! I don't know if she guessed that we were watching or not, but everyone pretended to be queens, they played the role well, but she did not play the role. Would a real queen allow herself to be a queen pretend?

"But, Comrade Stalin, it is unpredictable.

- Comrade Stalin, she is sometimes uncontrollable.

- All right, then the question is put to a vote. Who is in favor of appointing a spare queen of Spain? - Stalin looks at Messer, then at Kholovanov. Neither of them raised their hands.

"Very well," says Comrade Stalin, and slowly raises his right hand.

Holovanov and Messer, without saying a word, turned their heads in different directions: one - examine the shaggy beard of Marx in the portrait, the other - the impudent disheveled sparrow with small beady eyes, leaping presumptuously behind the window frame.

"Good," Comrade Stalin repeated almost in syllables. - And who is against it?

Messer's hand went up.

Who abstained?

Holovanov's hand went up.

Opinions were divided, comrades, one was for, one was against, one abstained. What to do? Let's decide this: each vote is 33.33 percent of the total. The three of us make up - 99.99 percent. Where did 0.01 percent of the total go in this case? We are all on commission.

are equal, but in this case there is a discrepancy with mathematics. Therefore, I suggest that the vote of each member of the commission is 33.33 percent, and the vote of the chairman is 33.34 percent. Then when added, we get the desired 100%. Who will object to the laws of mathematics?

There were no objections to the laws of mathematics.

"Therefore, comrades," Stalin continues, "we will write it down like this: "for" - 33.34 percent of the votes, "against" - 33.33 percent of the votes, with 33.33 percent abstaining. Thus the proposal accepted...

- Comrade Stalin, - Messer is strict. "Comrade Stalin, she cannot be queen!"

- Why?

She doesn't look like a queen. It just doesn't fit the build. - Messer showed Stalin what in his view are the queen's hips and what is the volume of the chest.

And Stalin agreed. In his mind, the embodiment of a real queen was a German woman on Russian throne, Catherine. Stalin represented her as a woman with powerful breasts and equally powerful hips. She, in the Stalinist sense, could reach her nipples, but only with the most fingertips.

The pretender to the Spanish throne does not meet these standards.

"She doesn't meet the standards," Stalin ruefully summed up, "and the queen doesn't pulls. It is clear.

And suddenly found:

- Are you drawn to the princess?

Messer was confused. In his mind, the princess is small, thin, fragile, quivering ... I was forced to admit: according to the physique, it pulls on a princess.

— In! Stalin said. — In! To begin with, we will appoint a princess. Doesn't pull on the queen - and nothing, from whom do queens come from? Let's be optimistic, let's hope that in time she will develop into a queen. Comrade Holovanov, write.

And Kholovanov is already behind the huge "Underwood", and the form is already ready - "Proletarians of all countries, unite! All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Central Committee. IN in the upper right corner habitually and quickly spanked: "Top secret. Special folder. recaptured and froze. A look at Stalin: ready.

Stalin walked across the room, turned around, stopped.

"Decree of the Central Committee," he dictated hoarsely. — The Central Committee has decided... a colon... appoint Spanish princess... open bracket... infanta... close bracket... comma... heiress to the Spanish throne... Streletskaya Anastasia Andreevna... comma... undercover alias... dash... Firebird... dot...

The head of the special train, Kabalava, hurries to an intelligence meeting. The order is strict: if a signal is set, it means that at ten in the evening he should be at the agreed place. Location: empty a mail car at a dead end among hundreds of similar cars. There, waiting for him, is someone without a name, who looks like Pilsudsky. He pays twenty-five rubles for a meeting and demands everything about Comrade Beria. Literally everything: with whom he met, with whom he spoke, what he spoke about, how many minutes he spoke.

And for the entire staff of the special train, the material demands: who has what weaknesses, who needs what ...

- Two days ago, Comrade Beria was on the train after work. He had a friend in the car with him.

Zavenyagin. They entered the compartment and talked for thirty minutes.

Pan is wrong. The meeting lasted thirty-two minutes.

- May be. Last night, Comrade Serebryansky came here to see Comrade Beria.

- For what?

- Don't know.

- What did you have with you?

- Briefcase.

- What's in the briefcase?

— How should I know?

- Didn't open it in front of you?

- No.

- But pan is lying. Pan Serebryansky opened a briefcase in the carriage corridor. So?

- So.

- Here's what, pan Kabalava. If you lie, I'll hand you over to Pan Beria. Here is daddy on pan. For what

Do I need such a false sir?

Kabalava figured: but he will pass.

CHAPTER 19

1

Hello Comrade Streltska.

Hello, Comrade Stalin.

— I have looked through all the materials that are collected on you, including the film about the execution. Main our business is control. I gave you control. You have passed all tests. You've been good... And Holovanov shot well. The main thing is to shoot near the head, but not damage the hearing the nerves of the person being tested. Fainting at the control shooting for a girl your age, like us now established - a common occurrence. You had a deep faint, - and smiled. - I hope you don't resent me for controlling my people in unusual ways.

And she smiled.

"I would control my people too... in unusual ways.

Stalin clearly liked this answer. He doesn't hide it. There were moments in his life when above all his qualities suddenly rose-sparkled humanity. During these moments he did not play role and did not deceive the interlocutor, and the interlocutor knew this. These rare moments of frank human kindness, Stalin could bewitch anyone. Worse than any wizard.

And if Nastya the Firebird at that moment received an order to give her life for Stalin, she would The order was carried out without a moment's thought. He has fascinated her for a long time. Now she's just looks into the cheerful mischievous lights of his radiant eyes, she revels in the happiness of being with him.

- Comrade Streletskaya, you passed the control, and I called you in order to ask one not quite a common question. I don't give a minute to think. I need an instant response thoughts...

2

Special courier of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Anastasia Andreevna Streletskaya, agent pseudonym Firebird, left the Stalinist office as a Spanish infanta, heir to the throne.

She answered Stalin's question simply, quickly and decisively: yes, to be the Spanish queen ready. Stalin knew in advance her answer, only such an answer, only such a tone from her and expected. Stalin said that she would be the Spanish queen, she would certainly be, but for this it was necessary to work hard on yourself. And for starters, she is appointed by the Spanish princess, the infanta in their language. Comrade read out Stalin corresponding top secret decision of the Central Committee and wished success in mastering a new profession.

In the Stalinist reception room, no attention was paid to the heir to the Spanish throne. On the forehead

heirs, their high titles are not written, the crown is not yet laid, trumpeters do not run ahead, and fanfares do not announce the appearance of the reigning person. Bye. And instead of royal outfits on the heir to the throne, a tunic with scarlet buttonholes and a wide commander's belt. So look at something in general and nothing. If only there were no orders.

In the Stalinist waiting room, a young aircraft designer is waiting for his turn: on a wide lapel striped jacket Order of Lenin. One Order. The former Deputy People's Party is still waiting for an appointment commissar of the defense industry. The one without medals. Its straight from Amurlag to the reception comrade Stalin pulled. In a sweatshirt. Holovanov on the "Stalin route" delivered. In flight the former deputy people's commissar was fed pineapples and hazel grouse, because for passengers "Stalin's route" diet is the same without distinction, you are a deputy people's commissar or a former deputy. So here he is without orders. Instead of orders, the inhabitant of Amurlag has multi-valued chests decorated with numbers. And back. Don't recognize him. In general, it must be said that for some reason the inhabitants of Amurlag quickly lose weight and appearance is changed.

Because the former deputy people's commissar does not look like himself. Therefore, others who are waiting for him will not recognize him. How would. They look out the window, they look at the cracks on the Kremlin wall. Former master who coolly ruled giant factories from Voronezh to Komsomolsk, it's really not easy to find out: the neck - what's your goose. With Adam's apple. And the ears on a shaved skull are like the handle of a jug. They bulged out.

The mustachioed commander sits in the waiting room. He has four Orders of the Red Banner. Nearly sparkling. There is also the Order of Lenin. But only one. And here from Stalin's office fifochka fluttered out: no body, no meat, one soul girded with a belt. And on the chest are two Orders of Lenin sparkle with platinum and gold. Either a polar explorer from an ice floe, or a scout from an enemy camp.

All three turned after her: strong!

3

- Comrade Stalin, what will be the instructions for the Spanish group?

- The Firebird is excluded from the group, she has nothing else to do there. Cook it individually according to the main option. Responsible for the preparation - Messer, and you, comrade Kholovanov, I assign personal responsibility for the undercover exit.

- Eat.

- The Spanish group - three days of vacation. Make sure people get some rest. driven out I don't need horses. Yes, and you, Comrade Kholovanov, it's time to sleep off. To my knowledge, you are not follow the order and do not sleep for the prescribed four hours a day. From such zeal Performance doesn't go up, it goes down. I order you to rest.

- Have a rest.

- After a three-day rest, the preparation of the Spanish group to continue, but now

spare option. I allow the Spanish group to open the purpose of the preparation. Clearly, this goal is not call spare.

4

The shirt on the Dragon is silk, scarlet. Like cheeks with frost. He brushed off his boots, and - in the gorenka.

Fun in the stove pine logs crackle. And outside the window the rain is pouring. With snow. The wind is humming. Twilight covers the early taiga.

- Sort out your notebooks. I say right away: for the essay "If I were a queen" everyone excellent marks. The cloak on the Dragon is all wet. And the boots are wet. The girls take off his coat. Everything at once. For some reason, everyone wants to help the Dragon, to touch him, a speck of dust with his red shake off shirts.

- Well, all to the fire. I'm going to tell you guys something interesting.

5

For hundreds of kilometers the wild dense forest. Wet in the forest, dark, cold and scary. The storm is buzzing pampers with the tops of cedars. Animals hide in lairs from the storm. It's cold for the animals in the forest, it's disgusting. A people under the roof. In warmth. In comfort.

Kholovanov brought treats with him: a box of Posolskoy vodka, a barrel of beer, sturgeon caviar half a bucket of fragrant Moscow bread. He brought Poltava fat, a dozen circles of sausage Krakow. Not our "Krakow", but the real one, the one from the city of Krakow. And the Poles owe you to report, in the production of sausages they have a concept. He brought a lot more: come on, hostesses, on the table cover!

Six hostesses, one guest: everyone goes to the kitchen to peel and fry potatoes, and the guest goes to the bathhouse. Let the bones will fall from the road, then we will feast. They saw off the Dragon with laughter, jokes: we live in monastic humility, there are no males for a hundred miles, because there is no one for you, Dragon, and whip with a broom.

6

The feast succeeded. The first toast to Comrade Stalin, to his concern for intelligence officers. Melted vodka "Ambassadorial" that wall of ice, on one side of which is the boss, on the other - subordinates.

- Have you guessed, girls, for what cases you are being prepared?

- We, Sasha, guessed it, but it's better if you tell it yourself.

It is not right to call such a responsible comrade Sasha. Him or a friend Holovanov, or undercover pseudonym - Dragon ... But now for some reason everyone is warmer because impudent Gyurza Dragon somehow called at home. Her sly eyes already darkened, and her smile

ambiguous in the very corners of the lips is hidden.

And somehow, all at once, it just became and joyful. The dragon loves it too. You can see from it.

- Your work, girls, will be honorable. During the war, each of you will lead undercover

terrorist group. Task: the extermination of people with a very high position.

- We understood that.

— That's not all. You will take the place of those who were exterminated by you and take the reins of government. Each of you will be ruled by a huge province of Spain: Andalusia, Catalonia, Valencia, Granada, Navarre...

The girls did not expect such a high rise. Thought: it is necessary to exterminate the mayors of cities, yes capitalists. And Comrade Stalin has such confidence. Because everyone wants their own love pour it out to Comrade Stalin. But there is no Comrade Stalin here, in the dense taiga. 'Cause all love destined for Comrade Stalin, poured out on the Dragon. He is by the fire, by the stove, by the story tells. And each strives to get closer to him, each wants to snuggle up to him. Circle listeners therefore quite close.

— That's not all. At first you will be as if in the shadows, you will manage, remaining invisible. But over time, titles will be assigned to you. You will become baronesses, princesses, duchesses... Who knows, maybe which of you will rise even higher. The first stage of your preparation is already completed, and therefore I announce to you three days of vacation.

7

The gramophone sings the songs of the decomposed bourgeoisie. The table has been moved. Dancing. Decided to: not to offend anyone, the right to invite to the dance was taken away from the Dragon. The girls themselves turn installed. By lot. They broke sticks of different lengths from a broom, those sticks are in a fist. clamped with the same tips outward. And each draw its own fate. What is the longest stick will fall out, toy and dance with the Dragon first. And what is the shortest stick, the last one to be. And Sasha Dragon went circling each in turn. The dancer was skilled. And tireless. Turned them around one by one. No wonder he is Comrade Stalin's personal pilot. not without reason at air parades, loops in the air twist for hours. Spins as long as there is enough kerosene. will land, refuel - and again. He never gets dizzy. Strength and endurance in it - on three Bugaev. And warmth - everyone will get it. And there will still be. And dancing with him is a pleasure.

The girls are in a circle, whispering, laughing, looking at the Dragon. delegate among themselves choose. And the Dragon laughs, collapses in an armchair, jokingly fanning himself with the Pravda newspaper. Like a Japanese fan.

Contagion, a delegate from the public, comes to him: his green eyes are burning with an emerald light. Looks cheeky, straight and bold:

- Sasha, can I contact you on a personal matter?

- Turn.

We all have a request.

- Let's.

Where are you flying in this weather? Stay with us all night. A?

CHAPTER 20

1

Of course, the question arises: does the Central Committee of the All-Union
The Communist Party (Bolsheviks) to appoint someone to the post of Spanish Infanta?

Here I am compelled to tell the pure truth: the Central Committee has the right to appoint
any position.

2

- Comrade Stalin, the tests of the SA system have been successfully completed.

- Fine. What do you think, if you crush an enemy's head from four kilometers, then standing
next to guess what happened?

- No one will guess.

- And if there are professionals of a high caliber nearby?

"Still don't get it.

- This needs to be checked. Do another experiment.

- Comrade Stalin, experts are needed for the latest experiment with the SA weapon system.

upper class. Whom, how and under what pretext to gather?

"I'll order them to get together." To a meeting.

- Where?

- Government dacha on Lake Beloye.

- Who will be present?

— Beria, Akazis...

- Akazis, Comrade Stalin...

- Oh yes. Akazis jumped through the window for some reason. Then Zavenyagin, Serebryansky ... And we need more
one...

3

- Hello, Firebird. I am a sorcerer. You will be my student.

- Hello, sorcerer.

- Know, Firebird, I opposed you. In my opinion, you are the best, but the Spanish

You won't make a queen anyway. But Comrade Stalin has a different opinion. Comrade Stalin

ordered to prepare you. I will fulfill the order, in a short time I will try to teach you a lot.

Remember right away: if you want to succeed, do not imitate anyone. You can and should learn from others.

You must learn from everyone. But don't you dare imitate anyone. If a poet is told that his poems are good, like Pushkin's poems, then the poet should not take this as praise. On the contrary, it is the most the worst thing he can hear. This means that Pushkin is the first, and our poet is only the second, even after Pushkin. The Romans believed that it was better to be the first in a small village than second in Rome. Remember, Firebird: you must be the first. And for this you need to find your own path. The paths traversed by Copernicus, Gogol, Ford, Magellan, Aivazovsky or Oginsky, led to success only because no one had walked these paths before them. Everyone who is for they will go for the second, third and hundredth time - just an imitator. And success lies on the paths which do not yet exist, which have not been trodden by anyone. Therefore, I demand: look for your own path. Absolutely unusual. In any case, look for your style, your approach. You have this trait. You are always on you go off-road. So let it stay that way. Your business is reconnaissance, your business is capture and retention of power. Find your own way in these matters. Go your own way so that others don't get you compared so that others know: you are the first on this path. Let others imitate you ... And achieve this is easy. You just have to always be yourself. All people are different. Each one is unique. You just need appreciate your uniqueness. And you are unique. Unique as..." He paused for a moment, looking for comparisons. You are as unique as a snowflake.

4

Three stations are crowded. At three stations - a tram invasion. Trams are beauty green and blue lights. And everyone rattles, all the wheels grind on the turns, all the brakes they creak, all at once sparks fall to the ground from arcs, all ring with bells - they do not let up, in all on trams, people are compressed like sprats in jars - in oil, in tomato sauce and in their own juice, on all the tram steps the people of Moscow are in clusters. The rails are intertwined into a single ball, and across the railroad tracks - cars in a jamb and people in a shaft.

Caps, hats. Passengers leaving and arriving. Foul-mouthed porters - in three suitcases in each hand and two more bags on each shoulder, in reverse. punks with accordion. The children are yelling. The aunt is angry, huge, in a white dirty tattered dressing gown all sparkled, pies rubber praising.

The station cat crunches with rats, all crumpled with happiness. Trade prostitutes deployed like a whaling fleet in the Bering Sea. Pickpockets slip. Glasses engineer. With a briefcase. I arrived at the report to boast how Raychichlag exceeds its plans. Komsomol members Volunteers go to the taiga as freelance brigadiers. And half-educated enthusiasts on a ticket Komsomol rod for the honorable work of guards and escorts. at BAM. The guitars are ringing, the girls are in they dance on the platform in handkerchiefs.

People's memory, how short you are. Where do you, memory, remember some BAMlag and half a million

BAM prisoners, who since 1933 felled pine under the highway of the century, poured embankments, chopped slopes, gnawed tunnels?

- Go, Nastya, to the policeman, ask for a gun.

Nastya went.

- Give me the gun.

5

The policeman at the post Nightingale the robber puffs out his cheeks, whistles into a whistle, waving his wand. The trams go past him in an iron row, like tanks on Red Square.

Only tanks move in one direction, but here everything is at the same time, not giving way to anyone, in all directions at once, and everyone strives to interfere with everyone else. And cars in droves. And people are like that to each other on their heads and climb. A policeman only blinks an eye - everything will be mixed up in an instant. Because he he waves his stick without blinking, without being distracted from the service.

Then an impudent girl approached him, not being afraid of the sight of his formidable, approached, and says: "Give me the gun!"

What impudence... A formidable policeman turned to her with a firm look to dry up the impudent girl-with-crush-incinerate. It didn't work out. Himself in her eyes ran into. Splashed she glance, pacified. The policeman takes out a pistol of the latest design, "TT". But the gun is not just like that, a leather strap is fastened to the pistol grip so as not to get lost. smiled policeman, unfastened the strap, handed the pistol and went about his business: they say, now step back and don't stop working.

6

Undercover exit is an operation, the meaning of which is to get out of the capital of the world proletariat, our man would find himself in the enemy's lair.

It sounds simple, but there is a caveat: in the enemy lair, you need to be in such a way that upon arrival at the aforesaid lair would not have taken our brother by the fluffy tail, would not have twisted the fins behind his back.

Behind the agent's exit is legalization and the creation of a recruiting base. Everything can burn but above all, they burn in touch. Communication in undercover intelligence can be personal and impersonal. Burn like on one or the other. According to world statistics, 93 percent of failures are in undercover communications.

"How, sorcerer, do you know all this?"

"I have always been attracted to secrets. So I attended lectures at the best intelligence schools and academies around the world.

"It's good for you, sorcerer: you came wherever you want, swindled everyone, sit and listen to what people are talking about.

- Nonsense. You don't have to hypnotize anyone. Nobody but yourself. You convince yourself that you

the best, you convince yourself that in any business only success awaits you, and only a resounding success, you convince yourself that your life is a triumph. Fate always gives everyone exactly as much as from her you demand. In any business, only one thing is needed for success: desire. Close your eyes and say: "I want!"

7

Andersen wrote a fairy tale about the princess and the pea. After that, we think: princess means sissy. So it was. Andersen spoke the truth. Because they, the kings-kings, power lost: mellow. Where are they now, monarchs?

Therefore, Comrade Stalin at the Institute of the World Revolution trains leading cadres
monarchical composition is put on a different basis:

- Come on, Anastasyushka, pull yourself up like a worker-peasant.

CHAPTER 21

1

A long time ago, our sorcerer Rudolf Messer was a boy. I studied at school. The school is in capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the beautiful city of Vienna, near the center. And not a school at all, but closed boarding house: an old park behind iron bars, squirrels jumping over cedars, a mansion red brick, and the corners are white, stone, the windows are high, narrow, round on top, carved doors, the handles on the doors are bronze bird's paws. Nearby - the center of the great city, and here - peace and quiet.

Frau Bertina commanded that boarding house, a kind of Snow Queen with beautiful ice eyes. Nobody remembers the color of her eyes. Because he does not remember that there was no color. There were only huge, like a cat in the dark, pupils. The boarding house was formerly owned and operated by husband. He somehow died quickly and strangely. The police came, but no one and nothing to convict could. It was after that Frau that she took the reins of government with a tender, narrow palm with long fingers.

Frau Bertina was set as an example. She made the school one of the best in the beautiful capital. You could get into her boarding school only for good money. Frau Bertina is charming smiled, and the ministers who came to visit their children kissed her hand.

And when my parents left...

Everyone was afraid of her. When she screamed, Rudy Messer's eyes darkened. And not only him. The cry did not end, but began. She beat. Everyone. She also punished older boys and in some special way. She took them one by one to her for the whole night. Then they somehow smiled sadly and enigmatically. But none revealed the secret. Even among themselves who visited executions did not share their impressions.

However, she punished not only the elders in this way.

Frau Bertina summoned Rudi Messer to her office. Late in the evening. When everyone was asleep. She let Rudy go ahead and locked the door with a key. The lock clicked lonely, sadly.

- Come here.

Approached.

"You're a bad boy, Rudy. You write with mistakes. Put your hand up.

Framed. She closed her eyes blissfully. Her lips touched the enigmatic smile of Mona Lisa.

Frau swung, struck the ruler on her palm and exhaled: ahhhh.

Wild pain burned his palm. Rudy apparently even lost consciousness for a moment. Bitten Rudy lips. He didn't know why he shouldn't scream, he just decided that.

"Scream," she whispered. - Scream.

And then again the pain pierced all the way to the heels.

And the green lamp under the ceiling dimmed. He didn't know for how long. He first felt his cheek on the carpet, then ear and left eye. Blinked. Her pianist's slender fingers gently took it palm and unfolded it:

"Rudy, this is going to really hurt. Scream.

He wanted to see the ruler, which would now fly up to the ceiling again. He looks for ruler. But instead of a ruler, I saw her eyes.

Crazy eyes. And a slightly ink-stained nose bridge. She is a teacher. She is good teacher. Smart, strict, demanding. She checked notebooks until dark.

Her fingers are covered in ink. She sat in thought, her face resting in her hands. 'Cause the ink is on nose bridge. Or adjusted her big glasses, which made her eyes even bigger. Even more beautiful. More scarier. Now she has no glasses, but the ink remains.

Rudy opened his eyes wide. Opened up. For some reason, an ink speck between these eyes of his attention screwed up. He tries to see the speck.

Another blow would have distracted him. That's why he told her:

- Do not hit me.

Frau Bertina obeyed and lowered the ruler. And then for some reason he began to look at her cabinet. Frau Bertina sits silently. Rudy looked through the next door - there is her apartment. Nothing I didn't see anything interesting, except for chains, lashes and whips. An apartment is like an apartment. He looks back at ink stain on her nose:

- I have to go.

She does not mind, clicks the lock and opens the door for him.

2

Rudy didn't sleep all night. Scolded himself. Curiosity is a powerful thing. Why is he so weak? Necessary was to bear the pain. Maybe you should have screamed? She asked Frau Bertina to scream. Then he would found out what happened next.

Rudy Messer decided to get to her for a night of punishment again. It's interesting: what is all this will it end? But she didn't call him again. OK. He began to write with so many mistakes which he should have been beaten with a whip every day. By the hour. Or two.

But she didn't call. He began to write across the lines. She gave him excellent marks. He stopped writing altogether. And she continued to celebrate his efforts. He knew that she called others to all night long. He started breaking glass. Did not help.

He met her in the corridor and said that in the evening he would set fire to the school. Here it exploded.

Rudy gets a late night whipping call and instead she yells. He didn't like it.

He looked into her eyes, or rather, between the eyes, in the hope that the bridge of the nose over a thin nose with quivering nostrils smeared with ink.

But there was no ink. And then...

Rudi Messer imagined that there is a dot right between the black eyes. While she was screaming, Rudy looked at the floor. But she fell silent for a moment, in order to catch her breath and take a sip of air, raised Rudy opened his eyes wide, carefully examining the nonexistent dot on the bridge of his nose, and gently asked:

- Don't yell.

Frau Bertina never yelled at him again. And did not call him to my office for execution. He didn't want her to hit her palm with a ruler. Just wondering what's next after the beating? And again a beautiful thought came into his bright head. I waited for the night, a light creak next door. Frau Bertina led the long, whimpering Friedrich to her. And Rudy is behind them. I met her furious eyes, imagined a dot between the eyes, examined her carefully and quietly reported:

- I'm not here.

And Friedrich too: no me.

3

Not every night Frau Bertina calls the boys to her for execution. Defined Rudy Messer calculated: executions are only 23 percent of the nights.

Curiosity, damn curiosity. Rudy Messer decided to find out what she does in those others, free nights. The mere thought that Frau Bertina could sleep at night did not cross his mind. came: he already knew enough about her.

Rudy slept during the day. Nobody has touched him for a long time. Know: pet. He is the only one in all school, at whom Frau Bertina does not shout. He can not go to classes and do whatever he likes. They even chatter, if he decides to set fire to the school, then she will not yell at him ...

Because Rudy sleeps right during the day, no one disturbs him. He trained himself to fall asleep there, then and insofar as, where, when and as required. He falls asleep without tossing or yawning. Lay down - fell asleep. AND I have trained myself to wake up at exactly the right moment when falling asleep.

In the evening he dressed warmer, took a raincoat. For some reason, I knew in advance: I had to go somewhere.

After eleven he knocked on her door. She opened. Rudy looked closely at a non-existent speck between the eyes and habitually announced that he was not here.

With this she agreed and did not pay any more attention to him.

She was going somewhere. Was going for a long time. She painted her face incredibly white, her lips - incredibly red. She knocked over a whole bottle of perfume on herself. Rudy sneezed. Good

she was preoccupied with herself and did not hear. Frau Bertina admires her reflection and cannot admire. I must tell the truth: there was something to admire. She dressed in a strange outfit who made the boy's heart beat so that they probably heard behind the wall. And then she undressed. And dressed in a different outfit. She loved to dress herself up and look in the mirror in different options. Undressed again. And got dressed. In each new outfit, she was better than in the previous one.

He sits in a corner, legs crossed, hands under his cheeks, waiting for what will happen next.

Finally she got up, threw on a black wide long cloak, which hid her whole, on the face - a hood. So no one will know her. With a long bronze key she opened in the bedroom secret door, put out the lamp.

And went into darkness.

4

Frau Bertina sees in the dark like an owl. No wonder she has such eyes. Rudy hurries after her. IN in the dark some kind of bump fell on a bucket, rumbled. She just started, listened to an instant and went forward just as swiftly and confidently, without illuminating her path with a lantern. An underground passage from the bedroom to some empty rooms, then to the street, into the rain. twisted key in a rusty lock, opened an iron door in a stone wall, and both found themselves in an alley. We rounded a corner and rounded another. Here the nightlife of the capital of the great empire...

A street of red lights opened before them. The people are festive, excited, not cheerful at night. Streams of people in two directions. Doors open. Music rumbles, Viennese beer is a river, roaring laughter. To the right and to the left are lanes. It's even more fun there.

Frau Bertina turned into the second lane on the left and knocked on an inconspicuous door. The door opened immediately, as if someone was standing behind it. A heavy door, but opened easily, without creak. Behind the door - a rich lady, black stockings - to the very feet of the crosshairs, in ostrich feathers lady. Frau Bertina kissed the lady in feathers, and Rudy told the lady confidentially that no him here.

She believed.

Behind an inconspicuous door was a dark narrow passage, another door, a turn and a staircase up, and another door. Behind this door is a labyrinth of red brocade, gold tassels, Turkish leather sofas and soft red gloom. For some reason, this is exactly how Rudy in his inflamed imagination represented the harem of the Sultan of Turkey.

Here you immediately lose your bearings. There are no windows, there are no right angles. Here from one oval hall transition to another, and from it - the corridors somewhere else and still. Everything here is soft, sloping, round, here magnificent drapery and thick carpets drown out laughter and groans. Frau Bertina went into the room,

which apparently belongs to her. This is not a room at all, this is a hall of mirrors in red light with a truly imperial bed in the middle, a bed under a brocade canopy, a bed palace, reflected in the mirrors countless times.

She throws off her cloak, once again looks in the mirror and grins to herself. Turns to the mirror right side. Left. She turns her back, admiring herself over her shoulder...

From the bedroom to a quiet corridor. In the same red darkness, in burgundy and gold reflections on naked bodies of bronze women. Rudy counted thirty-two doors in the corridor.

Frau Bertina walked down the corridor and opened the door to the great hall.

Gasped Rudy.

5

The hall is in the same red gloom as this whole fantastic labyrinth. Here is the same brocade and brushes golden, and Turkish sofas. And a lot of people. Men and women. It was the women who struck him. Rudy choked with abundance and variety. What outfits! What cuts! What cutouts! Which courage!

Men what? Men are like men. Tailcoats are black, shirt-fronts are white. Like in the theatre. Only in theater in the cards are not cut. And here the card game is immediately at all the tables. This is where the big ones lose. money doesn't bother you at all. Here they smoke cigars of unprecedented length, aroma inexpressible, here in the splashes of champagne, fun is seething, which will not be overshadowed by any loss. There is no money here consider. They smile here. They laugh here. Here they want.

Frau Bertina was ignored. She just kissed a beautiful lady. And further from one. Hooked up to the players. They brought a glass to her and filled it with something crystal-sparkling. foamy.

Here it is customary: they do not pay attention to the appearance of a woman. Women emerge from red light and in red light disappear. And they reappear.

I must say that it is not customary to pay attention to the appearance of men here. None shouts in delight as the Chief Public Prosecutor enters. Not at all. And when it appears head of the Vienna criminal police, no one yells greetings. People come easy with a smile, with a short gesture, they greet their own ... Here they do not pronounce names, do not name positions ...

Here they simply play, here they rest from righteous labors, they enjoy the joy of life.

Rudy Messer was the first to be noticed. Lovely lady with regal with an antique profile and huge pupils, like those of Frau Bertina, she squealed when she saw the boy in rain coat.

A black coat is adopted here. And who let the boy in here? It's too early for him to be here. And is there money in his pockets?

The muffled noise of the hall subsides as if with a roll. From Rudy, like from a pebble, into the swamp thrown, a slight wave of whisper, and immediately after it - a wave of silence. The wave hit the walls rebounded from them and fell silent. The hall is numb. At all tables, the game was interrupted. The laughter subsided. And one head after another, here and there they unfold like gun turrets in the direction of the enemy.

All are here. Here everyone knows everyone else. An outsider cannot appear here. Who is not with us, he is against us! Alien means enemy!

Rudy Messer leaned against the soft velvet wall. I realized that I made a mistake. Didn't fly in there.

There are too many secrets here. That's why he won't be allowed to leave. Therefore, they are directed at him dozens of pairs of eyes, like a main-caliber ordnance. He sees Rudy in front of him men in black. All the same as penguins. But with some foreign knowledge, Rudy recognizes these people as lawyers and prosecutors, counterfeiters and murderers, government advisers and observers of metropolitan newspapers, extortionists and bribe-takers, great Viennese publishers and deputies, cheaters and burglars, bankers and bank robbers, financial geniuses and union bosses, swindlers, child molesters and preachers of universal equality.

And women's eyes - all on him. There is more rage in women's eyes. They burn in all-destroying anger that overwhelms a noble lady at the moment when she was caught in someone else's bed, when the blanket was suddenly and decisively torn from her. Won't say hello to the whistleblower! Rudi looks into women's eyes, into the eyes of ladies-in-waiting of the imperial house, dancers and singers of the Viennese opera and ballet, actresses of the imperial theaters, mentors of youth, champions of women equality, fiery revolutionaries and ordinary high-society whores.

In the burgundy darkness, a large man at the entrance rose, behind a magnificent curtain felt fire shield, busily removed a red ax from two hooks. Left thumb tried the blade. The sharpness of the ax did not approve. Of course, the fireman's ax has never been in business. Posted here for order. It's time to get down to business. The big man looked at the boy Rudy, he raised and weighed the ax on his large palms and smiled. His face is cut by an old scar through forehead, left eyebrow, cheek, nostril and lips. He has thick lips and where they were cut, they are turned inside out. He smiles an incomprehensible smile that turns his disfigured lips into a terrible grimace.

Attention ladies - a big man.

It happens like this: you go through a swamp, and a snake swallows a frog. I'm sorry. But interesting.

Therefore, we will try to understand the delight in the wide cat pupils: now the universal female Heinz, the bouncer's favorite, will cut the boy to death on a luxurious carpet. It's so awful. And so unusual. Creepy. But interesting. The bouncer Heinz will cut him down right here, among the bronze statues, among the paintings, causing keen desires, among silver and crystal. And right there at the tables the boy will be cut into parts and wrapped in a carpet...

The bouncer Heinz walks between the tables, and the woman's eyes are enthusiastic from his muscular back, with huge hands, from a red, toy ax in these hands - to a boy in a raincoat, it is not known how it got here.

Rudy Messer shrank into a ball. For the first time I felt the wings of death above me. Wasn't in it fear. At times like this, it's not scary. When all is lost, there is nothing to fear.

There is nowhere to run away. And you won't get far. Rudy understands this. And he's not going to run away.

There are no thoughts of salvation in his head. He has no thoughts at all. He sees, hears and feels. He feels with his whole body, face, chest the growth of excitement in the hall.

In the Roman Colosseum, tens of thousands of women simultaneously entered into a state of deep sexual excitement during the moments of wild murders in the arena. Gladiators cut each other's throats killed elephants, giraffes, tigers and lions, but they themselves fell into the claws and teeth of those maddened by the horror of the beasts. There, in the arena, they drove out children and adults, prisoners and criminals, and all of Rome yelled with one wild howl. Animals tore people to shreds, animals tore each other. People killed animals and of people. And in the moments of murder, the women of Rome indulged in the simplest and most powerful pleasures of sexual love. Here, to the Colosseum, during the games, male prostitutes gathered from the whole empire. And they made good money. Wealthy Roman women with them to the performance the ten most hefty slaves were brought ... The great city, the capital of the world, during the fights of gladiators went crazy and turned into a single world where without distinction of ranks.

Let's not condemn the Romans for atrocities. They just didn't have cinema in those days. From due to their technical backwardness, they were forced to enjoy atrocities in kind, and not on wide screen.

Since those distant years, our nature has not changed in any way. We just learned our atrocity hide. Sometimes. Here, in the red darkness, the opportunity to see the murder not on the screen excited women. And Rudy Messer feels this excitement, he sees heaving breasts, sensual grin and flutter of nostrils, he hears the beat of women's hearts in a single rhythm.

The big muscular man turned to his admirers. They answered with one exhale with a groan. And then the big man lifted the axe.

7

Rudy Messer for some reason thought that now they would not kill someone, but ...

The thought is so simple... and so funny: you have to save yourself. The ax flew over him, froze, and then at first quietly, and then faster and faster, cutting through the air with a whistle, it flew at his head.

The main thing at this moment is to keep calm.

Rudy Messer knew that at the very last moment all views, without exception, would turned towards him.

He's been waiting for this moment. He sniffed the air into himself with his nostrils, as if trying to inhale it. all. At the same time, with his gaze, he seemed to draw their gaze into himself. He didn't know why to do so, he just did.

Hundreds of eyes turned into one pair of titanic black eyes...

Calmly and confidently, he imagined a black dot between these eyes, examined it in an instant attentively and said: "But I'm not here."

I thought a little and added: "And never was."

CHAPTER 22

1

In the burgundy darkness, it was as if the film had been turned off. Silent scene. Everyone looks at one point, everyone is silent. Suddenly everything came to life, stirred, moved, spoke. Suppressing the surging passion, women lit cigarettes, inhaling deeply, turning away from their partners and hiding the sparkle of their eyes eyelashes.

Bouncer Heinz with a red ax, swinging with a full swing, jabbed at the floor and cut precious carpet.

Frau Bertina, the only one in the entire hall, could not understand what was happening. Everyone is talking about some boy. But there is no boy! When the bouncer Heinz took the ax off the fireman shield, she became terrified. The horror was intensified by the general silence. No one interfered with Heinz, no one objected, no one shouted. The bouncer walked across the hall in complete silence, raised his ax and hit them on the floor.

Frau Bertina realized that in the general silence she could save herself and the others only cry. We must wake up the numb. And she squealed wildly, like a cat under a tram wheel. AND the ladies squealed. The gentlemen yelled, jumped up from their seats, grabbed their revolvers.

By the way, automatic pistols then only came into fashion, because - revolvers. This is first. And secondly, it is indecent to go to such a place without weapons.

All the revolvers were pulled out at once. Is it a joke? People are sitting, cutting cards, no one touch, and the bouncer Heinz swings a hatchet behind your back. There is something to squeal! Thank you Frau Bertine, drew attention, otherwise ...

The bouncer Heinz is standing, twirling the ax in his hands, not understanding anything. Right now at the entrance sat. Who put the ax in his hands? Why was he at this end of the hall? Why cut the carpet?

He raises his eyes to the gentlemen of the guests, in his eyes - an apology for the trouble.

And I didn't have time to utter an apology in a voice ... The chief warden of the Vienna prisons raised "Webley-Fosbury" forty-five caliber and, without aiming, pressed the trigger:

- Again this pig sniffed some filth!

2

Rudy Messer said that he was not here, and stepped aside a little. Everyone stirred and spoke. Beside Rudy, a red fire ax sliced through the Chinese carpet, slamming deep into the floor. Frau Bertina squealed, and all the ladies followed her. The gentlemen jumped up, drew their revolvers...

A shot rang out. Heinz's bouncer has a black dot right between his eyes on the bridge of his nose.

round shape with smooth edges. It looks like a hole was carefully drilled on a drilling machine.

The bouncer collapsed.

The ladies squealed even louder. Here, of course, not the Colosseum, but still death was the most real.

It's exciting.

3

And Rudy got tired. Sat in a corner, hung his head. Complete exhaustion. Such that if the mouth is opened, the tongue will fall out. Rudy did not know then the secrets of sorcerers. He just started. There was still little magical power in him, he did not know how to accumulate it, how to spend it, how restore.

I warn beginner sorcerers: working with a large audience requires beyond tension of will and absolute concentration.

Dealing with a large audience is devastating.

4

Frau Bertina shows up at school every day after lunch, scares the teachers, cooks and maids, watchmen and other staff and, of course, boys.

Frau Bertina appears fresh, well-rested, in a simple black closed dress without any ornaments, around the neck - a standing collar, starched to a crisp, to sparkling white. Like a nun. Sister Bertha. Pedantry and justified severity. daddy ministers to her kiss the fingertips.

Rudi knows that at night the same ministers kiss not only her fingertips...

And not only to her.

5

An amazing life fell to Rudik. He never went to school before. What he is interested in and so he knows, but what is not interesting, you still can't force him to learn and you won't drive it into his head. His interest is the secrets of politics, human secrets, the invisible side of life.

In every secret undertaking there is a word that covers and preserves the whole secret. found out Rudy: a luxurious brothel, a secret den of debauchery was called "Democracy" by knowledgeable people.

Every night in "Democracy" big things are happening, politics is being done: here in the red haze decisions are made, factories are sold here, exchange rates are set here, floodgates are opened inflation or suppress it. Here decide the fate of people and states. They are talking about the war. Oh small victorious war: you need to write off some millions, and quite a bit is not bad for this

fight. They share the budget. Here, at the card tables, the fate of the empire and Europe is decided.

Rudy Messer also attracts relationships between people. Who are these women in exciting outfits?

Where do they come from in the evenings, how do they spend their nights in Democracy, where do they disappear at dawn?

Rudy enters any room, sees everything and hears everything. And at dawn he gets into a carriage with a lady and goes where the sleepy coachman takes her.

So Rudi Messer ended up in a convent and in the imperial palace, in a den of murderers and in Central Committee of the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

In the imperial palace, once Rudy Messer, having passed all the guards, ran into a dog. That was a rottweiler. Bitch. But that is a different story. I'll tell you next time...

Rudi Messer has seen as many murders in a month as we don't see them in a movie in a month. He was struck by the glaring discrepancy between the real causes and details of the murders and press descriptions. Earth and sky. visible side. And invisible.

It was already clear to him then: the Austro-Hungarian Empire would get involved in a small victorious war. Empire war is not needed. People need war in a secret den. small war will turn into a big one and destroy the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And Russian too. And German.

6

The boy Rudy wanders around the beautiful city. Babylon. Pandemonium of people, the capital Austria and Hungary, the city of Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Bosniaks, Croats, Jews, Russians, Serbs and many more. In this city, Rudy learned Russian habits and Hungarian ones, and here he became friends. with Jews and Germans. Here he spoke in a dozen languages.

The main thing in languages is to be understood and to be understood. It's easy. The main thing is in the eyes look. There can be no problems with pronunciation. It is necessary to speak with a foreigner in his language as if you were mimicking him, of course, without revealing this method to him.

When telling a joke, we pretend to be Chinese, and French, and Georgian, and Russian, and Ukrainian, and Pole, and Jew, and anyone. And it works out quite well. This is how it should be done in serious conversation: mimic the interlocutor in his own language, without confessing to him, what you're exaggerating. Very soon he will consider you as his own.

Rudi Messer was an artist: he did not imitate, but mimicked; True, he mimicked without malice, and was everywhere.

He loved this great city. He was born here and lived all his still short life. And all in this city he was amazed. Every day he noticed something that others did not see. In the middle of the city monster building. Parliament. Facades on four sides. Each facade is a colonnade, a pediment, a sculptural group at the top: some kind of stone uncle points the way to a bright tomorrow.

People walk by, admire. And Rudi Messer looked, looked and was amazed at the discovery

to our own: we see particulars, and not the whole. A particular that everyone sees: the great and wise the stone man from the pediment points the way to happiness. But in general ... Nobody sees this: four sage point the way in different directions.

When Rudy entered the inside of the parliament, he was shocked. There five hundred wise men showed the way great empire in five hundred different directions. This empire could not fail to burst. At the very soon.

And one more thing: here, under the vaults of the parliament, he recognized those who spend their nights in a plush paradise...

Here, in Vienna, near the parliament, the boy Rudy once met a skinny artist. Eyes struck. It was impossible to call these eyes light blue, rather they were white, hungry light burning. And the neck of the artist was striking - too thin.

The boy Rudy approached the artist and gave him valuable advice:

- Take care of your neck. You'll break it if you go east.

The artist did not understand: if I go west all the time, and never east, then soon fall into the Atlantic Ocean.

Rudy himself didn't know why he had given his master such advice. I thought about it and agreed: if a person is everything time will only go west and never east, then...

Rudy realized his stupidity even then. But he could not get rid of this idea.

- In general, so - I warned you, and then as you know.

And then the skinny artist defiantly, right there, on Vienna Square, measured out ten steps to the east, dispersing the white doves. For some reason, his neck didn't break.

Then Rudy was put to shame for the first time.

7

Since those ancient times, Rudolf Messer loves the female gender. He likes athletic women and lush, completely unsportsmanlike women, he loves miniature and loves overall, loves thin and loves those that personify the type of portly Russian merchant-wife. Him dizzy when he sees a young monastery novice.

A woman in uniform, in any uniform - in military, police, railway, - brings him to insanity. He is driven crazy by schoolgirls and gymnasium students, students and their wise mentors. He loves blondes, brunettes, brown-haired women, and just loves redheads. Likes German, French, Russian, Japanese women, Poles, Bulgarians, Norwegians, Americans...

Stop. I didn't come from that end. It's easier to name exceptions. There is one combination Frau Bertina reminds him: a small woman, thin to the point of grace, smart to cunning, huge, as on an icon, eyes and a humble angelic face...

He loves those too. In fact, he loves them the most. But to them he most of all does not

trusts. He knows this devilish breed. And meeting a thin girl with big ones like dragonflies, eyes, he always remembers a quiet forest lake.

In which there are devils.

CHAPTER 23

1

There are not enough people. People are always missing. There are not enough engineers for the construction of new powder factories. There are not enough skilled workers in the production of diving bombers. There are not enough designers of artillery systems. Lack of investigators NKVD: they turned out to be enemies, and therefore they had to be shot. Thousands. We need new ones. Where take? And there are not enough people in intelligence. Always missing. Just because it is not enough that we always I want to know more than what we know.

— Listen, Firebird, combat mission. Now I'll take you to the Kremlin atelier. There French fashion magazines You choose what you like, they will immediately sew a suit for you. Fitting through hour. Second in two. Your hair will be done between fittings. There they can. Shoes, bag crocodile skin, gloves, bracelets, rings, rings, earrings - you will get everything in stock. There this is sufficient. In my opinion, sapphires are most suitable for your blue eyes. By the evening you should be Cinderella transformed, in glass shoes. You will go with me. In German embassy a new diplomatic aunt appeared. Works in mining. Insolent before that beats wedges under me. Strives to recruit. We will deny her this pleasure. We ourselves we verbalize. She is overconfident. There is plenty of material for it. We will use immediately many types of weapons, including the most terrible - jealousy. You will go to the theater with me. My guys pulled off such a feat with tickets that her box will be next to us. You, Nastya, will play the role of my mistress. Just play very carefully. It is necessary to create an impression with a German woman, that officially you and I are just colleagues or good friends, but behind this allegedly lies something more serious. I got it?

- All.

- Are you okay?

- I'll manage.

“And remember, this will come in handy for you in the future: jealousy is the most terrible, the most destructive and most creative force. Everything great that mankind has done has been done in outburst of jealousy.

2

Figaro is here. Figaro is there. Here and there. The hall is dark. The stage is light. Figaro gallops across the stage.

Nastya Figaro does not see, does not hear him. She has no time for Figaro. Her heart is beating like her a pack of hounds. The heart beats loudly to indecent. Now the neighbors will turn around

and shush: be quiet, girl, you're stopping me from listening! Nastya tries to breathe, as taught: to take a deep breath and hold the breath as long as possible, and then exhale deeply and hold the exhalation ... It does not help.

The reason for this is the dragon. He is nearby. Sasha Holovanov. Little dragon. Sasha. They will sit in silence a very long time. Until Figaro stops jumping. They will sit next to each other. pretend they're scared it is interesting to admire the galloping Figaro. They will clap their hands. Together with everyone.

But they are not sitting next to Figaro. Firebird and Dragon have work today. Undercover operation. They are good friends. They came to the theatre. And her shoulder at such a distance from his shoulder, on which the shoulders of good friends should be. Only one millimeter closer prescribed. She doesn't look at him. She is looking at the stage. And he too. And their hands are not visible from the side. Because her palm touched his hand by mistake. Unintentionally. And she squeezed Draconov's hand. And she let go. AND his hand squeezed hers powerfully and tenderly and let go too.

And then Nastya could not resist and, slowly turning her head to the right and back, with a bored look appreciated the restrained, silent company in the next box. Germans. Hitlerites. The form is black. Edges and lapels are white. Someone took a magnificent cloth and poured that cloth over their slender figures. On the left sleeves are red armbands with black swastikas. The form is attractive bewitching and frightening. Nastya knows that this is the form of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, yes it looks a lot like SS. And he understands: one does not interfere with the other, under a diplomatic form it can hide any other. Like we have. After all, we don't have anyone in enemy capitals under send diplomatic cover. They have it too. In a group of Germans, gray-haired diplomats general's correction. In the group of Germans there are young sports-looking guys, breeding stallions. Thoroughbreds. With them is a woman of stunning beauty. Also in black uniform, with white piping and lapels, in a black cap with a small silver skull and crossbones, with gold party badge on a tie. Nastya bit her lip a little, sliding along the beautiful German girl with a haughty look, and more than a single moment of her attention did not give her.

A long black Lincoln is taking Holovanov and Nastya home. The dragon blooms with joy:

- I didn't think, Nastya, that you were an actress. Real. How did you play the part? us guys insured. They are delighted. They say you play in the best theaters in Moscow, Stalin's awards receive. It's a pity you're going under deep cover, we've already highlighted you a little, you can't shine anymore. Otherwise!.. Oh, the devil... I would take you as my partner...

4

"Enemy of the people Trilisser!"

- I.

- If you were given a combat mission to eliminate Trotsky, would you cope?

- Yes! the enemy sighed with inspiration.

"So then, citizen Trilisser: the charges against you have not been dropped, your case has been temporarily suspended.

Comrade Stalin is giving you the last opportunity to serve the great

the cause of the complete extermination of the enemies of the people on a worldwide scale, wherever the enemies hide. To you

awarded the title of Commissioner of State Security of the second rank. Four rhombuses. By

army concepts - commander of the second rank. Here is your tunic with new signs

differences. And you will get trousers, boots, a cap and everything else later. Now the main thing is to restore

your weight and health. Any food in normal quantities is deadly for you now. Except

broth.

The huge uncle clapped his hands, the cell door opened, a stream of light poured into

open door, and in the rays of the rising sun appeared the silhouette of a fat cook. Catching up with the world

the chamber was broken into and overflowed with its thick aroma ...

5

There is no lake more beautiful than this. The Bolsheviks understood this best of all. That's why the shores announced White Lake reserved. And erected on the reserved shores summer cottages of the highest leadership.

- Rest, gain strength, - the head of the special group Shirmanov smiled.

Commissar of State Security of the second rank, comrade Trilisser, knows how

the executioners smile before being shot. And in the smile of a polite Holovanovsky lackey, a grin seemed of death.

One Trilisser at the government dacha. Fed up. A personal doctor has been assigned.

The cook is personal. Someone else is personal. The cottage has all the conditions for recreation and fruitful work. Comrade Trilisser is working. No one is given to know what exactly he is working on.

Therefore, the cook, the doctor and other servants appear only at the hours and minutes allotted to them, and then strict security puts them out of the gate. This is how it should be: comrade Trilisser, on the orders of a comrade Stalin is developing a plan to exterminate the most important of all enemies of mankind - the monster Trotsky.

Trilisser knows: the business will succeed - immediately Comrade Stalin on the chest of the distinguished Trilisser will be hanged by the Order of Lenin and elevated to sky-high heights of power.

In the long evenings, Trilisser wanders along an empty fenced piece of the coast. Okay here.

At ease. Phone calls don't pick up.

One thought Trilisser is tormented by: no matter how the idea is stolen. The idea is simple and beautiful: send to Trotsky of our man, who pretends to be a Trotskyist, will give our man to Trotsky an article to read that Trotsky is clever, Trotsky will bow over the article, with a devilish smile grin, his beard a la the devil will pinch, at this time our man with his ax in the skull and crackle!

Everything will look so beautiful: the Trotskyists themselves killed Trotsky! gnawed at their pack of dogs! And Trotsky's death will not be instantaneous, but slow, painful...

But the Caucasian Gutsin came up with a discussion of the plan: he would send Beria, someone else. Will listen Beria plan, and then announce that he himself invented everything ...

Is Stalin-Gutsin really so low as to allow the idea of Trilisser to someone else on give performance?

6

The sparkling train of Comrade Beria, creaking its brakes, stopped at a quiet terminus. stations without a name. All around security. Near the lake of indescribable beauty. Here, away from the noise and fuss, there will be a meeting on a topic that worries everyone so much. Topic: "How to liquidate Trotsky."

Chairman: People's Commissar of Internal Affairs General Commissar of State security comrade Beria. Three others are also present: Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Head of the Main Directorate of Camps of the NKVD of the USSR Commissioner of State Security 1st rank Comrade Zavenyagin, head of the special group of foreign liquidations, senior major State Security Comrade Serebryansky and former head of the Foreign Department OGPU Commissioner of State Security of the second rank Comrade Trilisser.

Everyone is looking at others. Why such a choice? Why Stalin-Gutsin ordered to gather to them? Beria's presence is understandable. Why is Zavenyagin here? What does it have to do with murder Trotsky can have the head of the Gulag? However, he is Beria's deputy. Why is Trilisser here? Why was he suddenly promoted? However, all four recently hand in hand with death walked around without a nose. If Yezhov stayed in power for a couple of weeks, and there would be no Lavrenty now Pavlovich Beria, but there would be bright memories of him. And Zavenyagin barely escaped from the clutches of death after Yezhov. Trilisser and Serebryansky's situation is even funnier: the charges against them have not been dropped and the sentences have not been overturned.

So... How are we, comrades, to destroy Trotsky?

7

The good thing about Lake Beloye is that the shores here are reserved. Indescribable beauty. For disguise is good. Makar the cinematographer unfolded the optics, slowly took out a huge brand new anti-tank rifle type SA.

Nearby is the commander of the special group Shirmanov. With powerful German binoculars.

Do you see everyone?

I see four.

— Do you know?

- Beria, Zavenyagin, Trilisser, Serebryansky.

— Won't you make a mistake?

- No.

- Check again. - Shirmanov unfolded in front of Makar photographs of four: front and profile. Makar doesn't need it. He is prepared for the experiment.

- Do not confuse, I ask?

- No.

"Then load it up."

CHAPTER 24

1

The proposal of comrade Trilisser was taken as a basis: to kill Trotsky with an ax or a hammer, decisive blow to the head. To the executor - to throw the Hero of the Soviet Union. Performer on death is coming. The most likely option: Trotsky's guards will kill the performer. Another probable option: Mexican police will kill him. Third: he will be killed by an avenger from Trotsky's supporters. A if the executor of the sentence remains alive, if he is lucky enough to escape, which is almost impossible, then he should be urgently evacuated from Mexico, awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union and eliminated by the forces of the NKVD special group. And the special group of the NKVD - to award orders, return to the Soviet Union and be shot for Trotskyism...

There are many who want to kill Trotsky. The Communists just lost the Civil war in Spain. The losers must be declared that Trotsky is to blame for everything, then from the killers volunteers will not end.

Everything seems to be clear, but such a matter requires a lot of time for discussion. Meeting - in an old mansion on the shores of the White Lake, in an oak hall, behind dark curtains. During breaks - holiday resort. Softly the wave splashes on the pebbles of the coastal. The lake is a million mirrors. Directly to the shore - spruce thickets. Hills all around, impenetrable forests. Comrade Trilisser looked at the distant shores with a full look, smiled with satisfaction, sighed deeply ...

And his head shattered with spray, splattering comrades Beria, Zavenyagin, Serebryansky. Not no one screamed, no one flinched. They only look at each other in a daze: what was that?

2

Three of them. In the cabin. Wheels rattle. Outside the window the forest flies by. Special train to Moscow
- What was it?

"I'm telling you exactly: Trilisser sighed very deeply. It can be like this: so you sigh,
that the head will burst?

- Maybe it's from the tension of thought? For so long, over the plan to eliminate Trotsky, I thought that ...

- Trilisser did not think about the plan for the liquidation of Trotsky. I gave him the plan. Above the plan I think all the time. My head didn't pop.

- But it cracked like a pumpkin.

- Like a light bulb.

— Kabalava! Where are you, bastard?

The head of the special train jumped out of the next door:

"Here I am, Comrade Beria!"

- Tell the radio operators - let them throw the code to the head of the Vologda NKVD: to the rest house
- three regiments of Chekists. Within a radius of two kilometers, pay attention to each match, to each trace, comb everything, all the dogs of the NKVD for search.

3

In the interweaving of paths, in the blue light of traffic lights, Comrade Beria's special train slowly to a dead end goes. The special train needs to hide between two repair trains. In the darkness, behind the abandoned warehouses personal cars are waiting. And security.

Beria flopped into the Lincoln with a sparkling radiator, threw to the driver:

— Home.

The deputy of Comrade Beria, the head of the Gulag, Comrade Zavenyagin, flopped down on the back Mercedes seat:

— Home.

He needs to get home, change clothes, slip out into the Moscow dungeon, walk two quarters under the streets and houses, get out of the dirty entrance to Kolkhoznaya Street, from there call a car from Stalin's garage and rush to a secret meeting with Stalin. Incredible must be reported event that Trilisser's head burst. It is necessary to report what Beria thinks on this score.

Head of the special group of foreign liquidations Major of State Security Serebryansky flopped into the back seat of the Ford:

— Home!

He also needs to get home. You also need to change clothes. Also from home at night unnoticed slip out, also go to a secret meeting and report to Kholovanov about a strange incident, about the bursting head of Trilisser and what Comrade Beria thinks about it.

The chiefs left. The special train stood between two repair trains, the lights went out. The head of the special train Me-lor Kabalava looked out of the window. Yes, the sheet hangs where it hangs supposed to. This is a secret call to an intelligence meeting. At the meeting, he will be required to provide a full report on where Beria was, what happened during the meeting and what Beria thinks about this.

4

Beria looks like a beast. Into space. His gaze is the undeciphered gaze of a crocodile, incomprehensible look. People are numb under Beria's gaze. He eats Caucasian grass. hand. Low tilting his head towards the plate. And tilting his head, he does not look at the plate, but at everyone at the table. By queues. Long stare. Without letting go of their eyes.

Lavrenty Pavlovich inclined his head to the very edge of the plate. He grabbed a bunch of grass with his fingers.

The head was frozen over the plate. And the hand froze

- Maybe not around, but at the dacha itself, you need to look?

"There was no one there but us.

What if it's invisible?

What is invisible?

- Messer, your mother!

— It's true. Messer can pretend to be invisible ...

- Where is he?

- According to my information, no one has seen Messer anywhere for a couple of weeks.

- I know the solution. This Gultin shows us strength. Scary. That's why he sent Messer.

- And what?

Trilisser was killed by Messer.

- How?

- Look, your mother!

Sleeping Makar, and his brain is working. He dreams of a machine of extermination of enemies. Machine of the future.

Machine extermination of enemies in droves. Every year - this is clear to anyone - enemies

there will be more and more. You need to exterminate them vigorously. Shooting? Nonsense. So much blood, so much screaming.

Again, ammo consumption. There is a better way. Since 1921, the Bolsheviks have been using gas

cameras. Gas chambers. Impractical. People in gas chambers yell and knock. Something else is needed. Need to

exterminate enemies quickly, cheaply, cleanly, without blood, without screams. Makar has been thinking about this for a long time, and now

in a dream, the idea was embodied in a wonderful plan. Condemned enemies are led into an elevator. Into the big elevator

in which at least one hundred heads are placed at once. The elevator cage is slatted. And the button is red.

Makar locks the enemies in a cage, while he presses the button. The cage flies, almost breaks, into the basement

floor. And there is a pool. The cell goes under the water. Drops quickly. Takes off, throwing tons

water. Enemies should be kept under water for only five minutes. And take the elevator up. No blood, no screams.

They will all choke under water at once ... You can also arrange a tilting floor near the elevator cage.

Then the corpses can be dumped directly into the car. Pressed another button, and - r-time, that's it

fell down.

Each piece should have its own name. Cipher. And Makar dreams of this name:

Proletarian Guillotine. PG.

What is SA?

CHAPTER 25

1

Can a sorcerer, even the best one, teach all sorcerers in a few months?
the wisdom of his student, even the most talented? I have to answer this question.
negative. I categorically declare: it is impossible to learn everything in such a short time.

However ... However, the sorcerer taught his respected, but unloved, student something. How he her
taught and what exactly, I, frankly, do not know. It is not given to me to know even a hundredth of the sorcerer's
secrets. And if I knew those secrets, then it would be - ho-ho! Then I would have become a sorcerer myself,
would have fooled the broad masses of the people on a world scale.

Preparations were quickly completed. Time does not wait. It's time to start World War II.
Therefore, an order from somewhere from the very top: the Spanish infante urgently arrive at the prom
masquerade.

Heir to the Spanish throne - personal transport: repair train
"Glavspetsremstroy-12".

It only seems to the ignorant that the train is being repaired. And inside, in the car, not the postal, not the
baggage, everything is arranged so that the passenger is comfortable and cozy. Outside, the rain is dull. A
inside - clean, warm, quiet. Only the wheels are rattling.

Once upon a time, in another life, Nastya Streletskaia was a passenger on this train. Everything is here for her
familiar, familiar. And the conductor is familiar.

— Hello, Sei Seich.

- Hello, Firebird.

— Where are you going?

- To the city of Kuibyshev. On the 913th kilometer. To Moscow-600.

2

She loves to sleep on the train. On the train, sleep is sweeter. Because the rhythm calms the heart. Under this
rhythm she fell asleep.

... And then, a hole under the fence, a white fluffy groomed dog with blue
eyes and shook the earth off her. Laika is polar. She entered someone else's summer cottage as
hostess. And the little girl Nastenka cringed with pity and fear. Gray chain Robespierre
tore apart anyone who appeared where he could reach. Robespierre tore apart a neighbor's cat and
a fox cub that once appeared here. Robespierre recognized only the owner. Any other person or
the beast was supposed to give Robespierre his life if he dared to come close. Everyone knew about it

because next to him did not appear. He was then killed, bloody Robespierre. Hot summer day 10 June 1937 Comrade Stalin's people shot fanged. Without shooting commander Streletsky it was not possible to arrest ... But until that day there was a whole life - amazing, cheerful and joyful, and in that life there was a white fluffy dog that came without fear straight to Robespierre, not being afraid of his vile fangs. The girl Nastenka is alone in the country. She is a gray dog on the chain. And another white uninvited impudent. Nastenka shrank in horror: now Robespierre will tear an uninvited guest to shreds. Scraps will go along the back streets. This is so scary. And so interesting. But For some reason, Robespierre did not tear the impudent guest. He tensed, froze, stretched out, and only the tip of his gray tail tossed convulsively.

The white dog fearlessly sniffed the subdued beast and suddenly, furiously and viciously, it bitten...

3

- We're on our way.

"Yes, thank you, Sei Seich. I don't sleep anymore.

In the evening dusk, the steel tracks parted in two. Once again. Passage 913th kilometer. By slope with white pebbles: "GLORY TO STALIN!" On the other side: "WE LIQUIDATE THE KULAKS AS CLASS!"

The kulaks were eliminated, but the slogan remained. Ahead is the bulk of the bridge across the Volga. But didn't go "Glavspetsremstroy-12" on the bridge. He was carried to the side, along a rusty track

- to the Zhiguli, to the steep slopes, into the rocks. Ledges to the right. Ledges to the left. The forest is wild. Intact. Here the wind has subsided. Darkness has increased. And the rain is pouring.

We passed a gorge of red granite with birches and Christmas trees on the cornices. Here is the oak grove. Hazel undergrowth spreads sparsely. A very small tunnel on the way, and behind the tunnel the rails are in dead end. The repair train dived into the tunnel, but did not emerge on the other side. In the tunnel, apparently short, - a branch to the side and in depth. The locomotive accelerated to full speed in the dungeon power. On the surface, he is forbidden to demonstrate driving performance to anyone, but here, in tunnels, drive as fast as you like. Here he is driving. And already towards the station takes off in the stream Sveta. Neither give nor take "Mayakovskaya". Only the name is different: MOSCOW-600. Loves comrade Stalin "Mayakovka". For height, for width, for space, for lightness of structures, for scope and grace. "Mayakovka" won many prizes at international exhibitions. Because it is not surprising that in Zhiguli, in the reserve capital of the USSR, the same architectural appearance is repeated.

Smoothly, smoothly, Glavspetsremstroy-12 stopped at a gray granite platform. Came out Nastya looked around. Yes... The central hall is wider here. And higher. And the mosaic under the ceilings is different. Same Beautiful. If you count the people on the platforms, then obviously over a hundred. But absorbs the space of people.

The width of an unprecedented underground palace, the lightness of the glittering columns, the height of the ceilings, the light flooded - all this turns people into small gnomes. Because the impression is deserted here.

Landed "Glavspetsremstroy-12" his lone passenger and went forward into the unknown under rocky. And in its place a freight train with boxes rolled up. The handsome lieutenant saluted Nastya, introduced himself:

— Lieutenant Shadrin. Hello. Are you a special courier of the Central Committee Firebird?

- Hello. I am the Firebird.

- May I have a certificate?

Nastya gives a silk handkerchief with the seal of the Central Committee and an indelible signature comrade Stalin.

- You, Firebird, the passage is everywhere. I will accompany you. The lieutenant picked up her overcoat and bag soldier: follow me.

The Silent escalator took them up into the polished gray granite hall. The walls are wide dark cracks. Like for beauty. Nastya understands - these are loopholes: from there, from the rocky depths, ShVAK automatic aircraft guns are now attacking her with their curious predatory stigmas are watching. And the greedy eyes of gunners. Nastya smiled at the loopholes: hello to you fiery!

From the underground hall, a bottomless elevator well leads up to the working bunkers. If the lift raised, then from this granite trap there is no way at all to penetrate there, upward.

The elevator chimed. The doors parted, letting Nastya and the lieutenant inside, and silently back. The elevator is the most ordinary, about thirty people. Only the usual buttons in these cases No. The doors closed and the elevator pulled up. The speed is great. The feeling is unpleasant, just like in mine when pulling high and fast. Stopped. The doors opened, and again they are in a wide empty hall with a single armored door and a dozen loopholes on all sides. Only granite here red. Here the documents were checked not only with Nastya, but also with the lieutenant of the escort.

They checked quickly, without nit-picking, and let them through the armored door into the web of underground galleries, corridors and passages. We passed through a vaulted marble hall, turned right, then left.

We found ourselves in a wide corridor paved with green and white stone. Mosaics on the walls wise commanders bowed over the cards; courageous commanders view the battlefield in binoculars; hungry proletarians of the world with red banners overthrow the hated capitalists, open the doors of the dungeons; soldiers of the Red Army in a deadly bayonet fight crowd and break brutalized enemies, and the same soldiers of the victorious Red Army in parade march along liberated cities of Europe.

- You there, in the corridor 66-K. Goodbye. I'm not allowed to enter there.

In corridor 66-K I met Nastya the Firebird Shirmanov, commander of the special group, assistant Holovanova.

Here, behind the armored door, the corridors are endless again. Nastya has already noticed: each corridor - its own unique combination of colors. Here the floor is also in huge chess cages. But Granite colors are red and white. Each corridor is like a street, from which to the left and to the right - neat and tidy lanes. Turned into one. On both sides there are leather doors. One a soldier fiddles with a screwdriver, screwing a bronze plate. On the plate - no title, no name, only undercover pseudonym: "Comrade Firebird." The soldier jumped aside. A hand under the trump card. A man walks past him without any insignia. Yes, only the soldier knows what is under these high-flying birds hide in modest tunics.

The office is clean and bright. Nastya did not immediately realize what was missing here. And there are not enough windows. Walls from floor to ceiling - soft warm cork. Along one wall are bookshelves full of books. her loved ones. Someone has tasted it. On the other wall is a map of the world, a map of Europe, a map of Spain and separate large map of the Mediterranean. The floor is oak parquet. Wide thick carpet. Drawing large, bright. The style is clearly Afghan. The table is wide. Phone battery, among them "Kremlin" and "turntable". The huge old safe is locked. The safe is clearly from the Putilov factory. Clearly work pre-revolutionary.

- Key?

- The dragon said that you know how to open this safe without a key.

Nastya nodded, releasing Shirmanov. I looked around. In the side wall of the office - three lungs doors. Behind one is a small room: a closet, a simple bed, but under a camel blanket. Behind the other door is a toilet and shower. In the third room - something like a kitchen and shelves to the ceiling with annual supply of bottles, cans, standard army food bags in silver foil.

Nastya was left alone, threw off her clothes, climbed into the shower. She loved to torture herself to death cold and then an unbearably hot stream, and again cold, and again hot. She loved maximum pressure. She loved washcloths as hard as steel brushes. It's a pity, only steam baths no yes a clean lake covered with ice, with a good hole for swimming.

She rubbed herself with a towel for a long, long time, and then just sat in a leather commander's in a high-backed chair and stared at a map of Spain.

Table oak under green cloth. Green color for the eyes is good - soothes. Cabinet simple, nothing more. She will have time to deal with her office. She can't wait with strangers get to know the city. Underground. Under the rock. Some signs on the doors are worth something. On the next I managed to notice the door: "Comrade the Beast." And there were more romantic pseudonyms. Yes and how not to wander around the city, which is destined for such a fate? Which of you had a chance to wander through the quiet

lanes of the future capital of the world?

5

Along the corridors - just like that. No purpose. She wanders, smiling to herself. Nastya goes booming empty spaces. Quiet. There a person will pass, but there the steps will sound. In some corridors there is a rumble, vanity, people in uniform and without. Like an anthill before the rain. But you turn the corner, and again - murmuring silence. In case of need, a lot of people can be accommodated here. And stocks here for many years, and even in every room in store. Offices, offices. There is no end to cabinets. doors along corridors - like scales along the back of a fish. For the most part - on locks, on seals. dust on sealing wax. They built it, sealed it up, if there is a need, they will open it. The cabinet stands locked in an endless row the same. Only sometimes here and there you will come across a busy corridor, where the doors slam often, as soldier's soles on a long march. And again - the realm of emptiness and silence.

Nastya found a lot of interesting things, found a sports center with a swimming pool, then another one, but only the pool is empty. There was no water in it yet.

Found a restaurant, and another one. And then the lifeless dining room: in the dark - the tables of the soldiers stacks are endless. And shops come across here and there, and again vaults, passages, passages, and doors along the corridors. Then came the corridors without granite and marble. Just gray concrete. It seems like from from the city center you will wander into the industrial outskirts. Pipes and cables are multi-colored. It's completely here nobody here. Corridors scatter in different directions. There is a light flickering here. Not really scary, but oppressive emptiness. OK. Let's go back. It would be nice if there were diagrams on the walls: a plan corridors and a green arrow - you are here. But there are no such schemes. Not allowed. Yes and not in turn every corridor. There, the whole passage is closed with gratings, like the Volga by a dam. There's a sentry with a Ural bayonet cuts off the path: ordered here. If the documents are presented, then they will let her in. But to what? And there the corridor leads to the devil knows where, into the darkness, into the cold, into the rat dampness. droplet with ceiling - bom-m-m-m. I don't want to put my nose in there. Nastya twirled back and forth, returned to familiar places. Here is the red and white corridor, here is the office. Too bad there are no windows. It would not hurt. Here is the doorbell.

— According to your order, the shamakhanskaya masquerade costume was delivered from the Kremlin atelier. queens. Would you like to try again?

6

When something is not clear to her, she cannot sleep. It is not clear: why arrange a prom masquerade?

86 special teams prepared one monarch or monarch for each country from all over earth. All groups worked in the strictest confidence, and none was connected to any other.

Future rulers did not know each other and could not know. And then it came into someone's stupid head
idiotic idea of the best graduates - those who are recommended for the highest positions and
approved, to gather together and arrange a masquerade. Everyone was allowed to invent any outfit for themselves,
from any material, the Kremlin atelier served each separately. Why is this?

Masquerade tomorrow. Tomorrow the future monarchs will see each other for the first time. A individual
Nastya was instructed today: at the masquerade it is allowed to call her undercover pseudonym,
real name and real title assigned by the Central Committee. But why?

7

- Nikolai Kuznetsov, undercover pseudonym - Pooh, Kaiser of Germany. Kaiser blushed a little.
and corrected himself: "The future Kaiser.

Nastya, dressed as an oriental ruler, extended her hand to the future Kaiser for a kiss,
introduced herself:

- Nastya Streletskaya, Firebird, Spanish Infanta.

She considered it indecent to call herself a future queen. Better pretend to be
the title that you already have - simply and modestly: Infanta.

CHAPTER 26

1

Material for undercover exit presented. Comrade Stalin once again looks through everything that collected for a scout who will operate in Spain under the undercover pseudonym Zhar bird: the results of psychological tests, the conclusion of the medical commission, questionnaires, protocols of covert searches, verbatim records of eavesdropping, reports of external observations, records of conversations in a dream and in delirium, compositions.

Stalin opened a notebook marked "Top Secret" - the essay "If I were a queen."

One page was enough for the writer. One offer. Three words. Thirteen letters.

Stalin read what he liked so much, what he had already read so many times. Composition turned out to be two letters shorter than its name: "I would conquer the world."

Comrade Stalin grinned. And decisively imposed a resolution.

2

"Amurles" wheezes with a drawn-out roar. Received ten thousand cubic meters in the Arkhangelsk city pine round timber and went into the fog. He is not afraid in the fog. In the fog, the timber carrier has no one to fear, except, of course, icebergs. No one else, nothing else, can collide with a timber carrier in the fog. Even if you can't see him in the blinding whiteness, if you don't even hear his beeps, then anyway, any In the darkness, he will figure out by smell - a timber truck is nearby. Pine tears drip. The aroma of taiga trouble for five miles around. Inside the timber truck, the tar smell is suffocating, and the solar stench, and the oil exhaust. Smell ocean and taiga - in a single bouquet.

Again, a timber truck is carrying around the world the dream of millions of convicts of logging camps to fall into pine pile and together with the logs sail away to hell where it's warm. Forest in stacks Kind. Fresh. Not lying. Not rotten. Directly from Pechorlag: "Komsomol forest - to the Motherland!"

The heavy shaft of the White Sea floats slowly out of impenetrable infinity, raises lightly "Amurles" high to the sky, releases it carefully almost to the very bottom and conveys how baton to the next shaft. The course is Mediterranean. The port of destination is Naples. Chief of the Italian people Benito Mussolini built a warship for a good friend of Comrade Stalin. Some unknowingly call it the blue cruiser. But this is not a cruiser, this is a squadron leader destroyers "Tashkent". The speed of "Tashkent" is unprecedented. The elegance is amazing. For such one Italians are only capable. And the damned pasta was painted by the leader of "Tashkent" not in our way, not in the dirty gray color of the Black Sea wave, but in the color of the azure sky of the Adriatic, everyone Black Sea ports to surprise and envy. The leader of "Tashkent" will soon join the fighting force

Black Sea Fleet. It is brought in Nikolaev. And it's time for Comrade Stalin with a dear friend pay off. In treeless Italy, taiga round timber is in great demand, at a good price. Because lumber caravans go like camels across the Sahara. An endless chain. To Italy. Forest

are being driven.

And only the captain of the Amurles, Sasha Yurin, knows: his timber carrier is carrying not only round timber odorous, but also passengers. Who are they, these passengers, how many of them, on what business and where are they going, to know the captain of "Amurles" is not given. The captain wants to know, but he remembers: his predecessors, captains around the world, accidentally touched some mysterious information and after that for a long time the captain's bridge did not linger. Maybe one of them was lucky, maybe with a hand numb in torn mitten, having fulfilled the norm, the former captain on the carriage now writes a ritual phrase: "Komsomol forest - to the Motherland!" But Captain Yurin does not believe in such luck. Hardly the one who secrets of such depth stuck his nose, they will leave him alive. Because Captain Sasha Yurin is a passenger not interested in secrets.

3

"I know what worries you, Firebird. You're getting ready to be queen, but you doubt do you have royal blood?

Yes, sorcerer.

- I will calm you, Firebird, - you have.

— How do you know?

- Calculated.

- How?

Let's count together. We will not climb into the depths of millennia. Let's deal with the last one millennium. A hundred years is four generations of people. A thousand years is forty generations. Imagine pyramid. You are the pinnacle. And under you forty floors. On each floor - the previous generation. Directly below you on the fortieth floor, only your two direct ancestors, father and mother, who created you.

- Yes.

Without them, your existence would not exist. Which of them is more important? Both. With absence you just wouldn't exist.

- Agree.

- And the father and mother were created by four people. You have two grandmothers and two grandfathers. Who knows from whom of the four gee inherited more, from whom less. And again, which one was more important? All.

- Agree.

"So, on the 39th floor of the pyramid, you have four direct ancestors. And you have great-grandparents,

like me, like each of us, had eight. This is the 38th floor. A generation earlier, each of us had 16 ancestors.

- And before that - 32.

- Here's a task for you, Nastya: calculate how many ancestors you had a thousand years ago.

Easy to count with paper and pencil. But the sorcerer sets tasks that, without paper and pencil to decide.

- 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024, 2048...

It goes fast at first. But the numbers are piling on one another in a very circle, dangling and get fat...

- 131,072 times 2. It turns out ... Amazing things turn out. Only twenty generations ago, that is, five hundred years ago, each of us had a million ancestors. 1 048 576 — for accuracy.

- Here's the arithmetic for you: up to a million ancestors had to go down twenty floors, and on the floor below there were two million. Well, I won't interfere.

Nastya took a long time to get to the first million, and then millions went to exfoliate one on another, turning into tens of millions, into hundreds...

It's easy to multiply 134,217,728 by two. But it's just hard for some to keep the result in memory and keep multiplying. And the Firebird was lucky with memory, because she, with her eyes fixed on the ceiling, whispers with lips:

- 137 billion 438 million 953 thousand 472 multiply by two and get ...

Slowly, the numbers multiply, multiply, multiply, and here is the result:

"A thousand years ago I should have had one thousand one hundred billion ancestors.

- More precisely?

— 1099511627776.

Maybe I'm wrong, but I got the same result. Now try to put them all together all their ancestors for the past forty generations. Do you know the easiest way?

- It is necessary to multiply the last figure from this series by two and subtract two.

- Right. Take action.

— 2199023255550.

- Agree. That's how many ancestors you must have in the last thousand years alone. We It was assumed that both men and women produced offspring at the age of 25 years. If they produced offspring before - and so it was all the time - then in a thousand years not forty generations, but more, and the number of ancestors increases absolutely astronomically manner. If we look into the depths for another thousand years, in the days of the Roman Empire, in the Vikings and the heyday of Byzantium, then the pyramid of your ancestors cannot be expressed in any

numbers.

"But there has never been, is not and cannot be so many people on earth.

"Of course it wasn't. Draw your own conclusions. If you think a little, you'll realize why did aristocrats trace their genealogy only along the male line from grandfather to father, from father to son, from son to grandson.

- It turned out a one-dimensional thread through the centuries.

- Yeah. And in the days of matriarchy, kinship was conducted through the female line - it also turned out one-dimensional thread. But if we take into account both the male and female lines at the same time, then it turns out three-dimensional pyramid, the components of which are not only impossible to remember by name, but even and express in numbers. As soon as people tried to take into account their ancestors both by male and by female lines at the same time, they quickly realized: we all come from common roots. Because even the Romans understood: there is not and cannot be a Caesar in whom slave blood would not flow, but there is no there cannot be a single slave in whom royal blood would not flow. All this can be expressed Simply put: all people are brothers.

4

Where to place passengers on a timber carrier? No problem. Presence of passengers provided at the design stage. Design bureau of a closed type, where designers for reliability, there were enemies exposed, they conveyed: "There is an opinion ..." Whose opinion, they did not explain. A was the opinion that a wealthy foreigner might sometimes be inflamed with a desire travel on a Soviet timber carrier. Transportation of one foreigner can bring income more than transporting a thousand cubic meters of round timber.

The opinion was taken into account, therefore, on the timber carriers of the Amur-Les series, the floor below the captain's bridge - a blind transverse corridor. From starboard to port. It is called corridor "A". At On the starboard side, the corridor "A" is sharply broken back and on the port side too. To starboard - three double cabins, and on the left - three. There is also something like a wardroom in that corridor, tiny kitchen and pantry. On the starboard side, the corridor ends with a heavy storm hatch and exit to something like a balcony cut into the hull - there is a lifeboat. And on the left board is arranged in exactly the same way. It turned out that timber carriers turned from purely cargo carriers, as it were, into cargo-passenger - understandably, with a decisive bias towards the main purpose.

The designers did a good job: they arranged everything so that the capitalist passengers would not would stir up the Soviet team, would not infect it with bacilli of bourgeois decay.

So that they were not heard there, so that bourgeois music and the cries of decomposition did not violate would be the labor rhythm of the Soviet crew and would not embarrass him. Corridor "A" is arranged so that from all the rest of the ship's rooms are isolated. You can enter there only from the captain's corridor.

And even if the bourgeois traveling to his own tiny boat deck gets out, even then it can only be seen from the shore or from another ship. And from his "Amurles" you can't see him at all. This happens with multi-storey houses: this is how the neighbor's balcony is arranged - pull your neck, don't pull, but the peep won't burn out.

However, there is nothing to see. So things went that no bourgeois pilgrims on ships of Exportles do not travel. Because the entrance to corridor "A" is always locked with a heavy door with a strong internal lock. Yes, and covered with a panel. Because the existence of such corridors on timber carriers of the Amurles type are few people even in the crews. The captain himself corridor "A" was only twice. During inspections. Germans, so that they are not okay, even though they are friends cursed, but realized that the number of windows outside does not match the number inside: additional rooms should be. Customs officers and port police climbed into Hamburg by ship: what is this? and this? Captain Sasha Yurin had to show them: the cabins here are empty. Looked at by the police. Order. And why is there so much grub in the pantry? To eat, captain answers. And what, you can't keep grub, or what, in the pantry of this corridor? Calmed down fascist comrades.

And the second time was also in Germany. In Rostock. The Germans, of course, friends, especially those who are from the Gestapo, but stick their noses into every crack, into which a self-respecting Frenchman does not would help. And again, Captain Sasha Yurin was forced to report that the cabins were there for passengers provided, but never used by anyone, there we keep a supply of grub just in case and blankets with sheets and pillows. The Germans insisted on taking a look. And everything seems to be gone. Only in one empty cabin turned out to be a fresh cigarette butt with red lipstick. Warm. Captain Yurin goes first. As the master of his vast homeland. A gang of inspectors is next. Entering the cabin assessing the situation, without hesitation for a long time, Sasha Yurin that cigarette butt with his hand - grab it! And in his teeth smoldering. He coughed, pulling. Non-smokers out of habit - like a nail in the liver. But it passed.

And now "Amurles" is rushing to fraternal fascist Italy; it is believed that there is no one ship, except for the crew. Check from keel to klotik - you will not find anyone. Indeed, the captain In the event of an inspection, he is obliged to do everything possible so that the inspectors get into the corridor "A" in the very last turn. Or better yet, don't get there at all. The door there, though heavy, but inconspicuous, not conspicuous.

Today, Captain Sasha Yurin feels in his gut: no checks are expected, but there are passengers. AND not only instinctively knows. The supply of fresh water there is autonomous. But hot water from a common boiler goes there. The highway is under the floor of the captain's cabin. Here on that highway thermal Sasha Yurin Curiosity for the sake of water meter screwed. You never know what instruments are not in the captain's cabin: here you and chronometers, and some other things with dials and hands, which we, people land, never come up with an application. Among all the devices and that glass with numbers.

Why not? Only Captain Yurin knows: someone is using hot water in corridor A.

Consume intensively. Let him use it - there will be enough boilers on the Amurles for two divisions. But on hot water consumption Captain Sasha Yurin can always, albeit approximately, estimate how much them there, the passengers. This time, judging by the meter reading, there are a lot of them. Apparently completely cabins busy. Six cabins in twos: twelve. Or maybe they take turns sleeping there? Then they may be even twenty-four. And thirty-six.

Where do they hide when the police are on the prowl? Obviously not for mattresses.

5

Before the departure of "Amurles" from Arkhangelsk, the last check came up. We have border guards vigilant. The entire ship was searched before loading. Then, during loading, each bundle of logs need to look. Little whether that? The forest is exported in millions of cubes, so the lumberjack jokers at the logging site they chop off a brush of some kind of bitch and put it in a pile or in a bunch of logs, with a note: "We extend the hand of friendship to the oppressed proletarians of the bourgeois world. Hello from the Komsomol volunteers of the 32nd camp department of Ust-Vymtag of the NKVD of the USSR. And then they can invest their heads. Saw sawn off. They are smart enough. Because - control and again control. To not be embarrassed again in front of classmates. Therefore, before leaving, a general check of the ship. It's already on gold and all sorts of things check. And so that the sailors do not interfere with the work of the border guards - general meeting of the crew. Topic: "Soviet sailor in a bourgeois port - a plenipotentiary representative of the motherland of the world proletariat.

"Here I am, comrades, putting the question: is the group of five people large enough? saw in a landmark in a foreign port, I want to share it with friends, but there are only five people in the group. So it turns out that interesting things pass by many. I propose to go to foreign ports not according to five people, and ten! To share the impression with many at once!

- Fifteen!

- Twenty!

"Come on, comrades, don't play the fool!" What are the numbers based on? Ten fifteen, twenty? On nothing. Pure subjectivism. If we go together, then the whole crew. Who for this offer?

The expression on their faces is obscene, but they accepted unanimously.

- And also, comrades, why not, upon returning to our native port, our initiative extend to the entire merchant fleet of the Soviet Union? Imagine how we are sailors with others will they love ships for such an initiative?

Everyone in the crew imagines how for such an initiative they are on all long-distance ships and in all port taverns they will fall in love. However, there is nothing to be done - it was unanimously approved.

But the enthusiasm of the masses is inexhaustible, the initiative from below is inexhaustible:

- Should a Soviet sailor go ashore in every enemy port? Here in

Last time we were in Alexandria. Are there Leninist places in Alexandria? Was there a friend

Lenin in Alexandria? The devil knows. So it hasn't been. So there are no such places. So what do we

in that Alexandria to look at, what to admire? There is nothing to see there. There was a lighthouse

Alexandria, and he broke. The backward capitalist technique is so rotten that they have everything

falls and collapses. Our lighthouse in Arkhangelsk has been standing for three years and has not fallen down. Repair it

- so he will stand still for the same amount. And they, the bourgeoisie, immediately collapsed the lighthouse.

"Maybe he never was there!"

- Right!

"Or we're going to Naples..."

The crew quieted down, alerted ...

— Did Comrade Lenin ever visit Naples? We do not have such information. So it hasn't been. So what we then in that Naples, excuse me, to admire? It is already visible, Naples, through the porthole onboard...

- Right!

- There is nothing for us, Soviet people, to hang around all sorts of Naples!

The psychology of the crowd is the same everywhere. In a crowd, people do things that no one in particular has ever done. would not have done. We are not alone. On the night of August 4, 1789, the French aristocracy in uniform renounced all her privileges in an impulse. Voluntary refusal did not lead to an outbreak people's love. On the contrary, a collapse of humiliation, oppression and ridicule fell upon the aristocracy. The harassment multiplied and soon resulted in the confiscation of property, in exile, in the fall of monarchy. And many of those who did not have time to escape soon climbed the bloody boards of the high platform on the Place de la Concorde. For the aristocracy under the knives of Mother Guillotine went the police and officials, sailors and officers, stove-makers and shopkeepers, bakers and sausage makers, thieves and prostitutes, peasants and loaders - all those who yesterday roared with delight when they publicly chopped off their heads royal. And heads flew into the baskets. Who would have thought that cut off heads don't die straightaway? Who could have imagined that heads could still swear, hissing, that they could bite, gnaw baskets? Who knew that once a week you have to change the baskets to collect the heads? Heads cut off have a strange craving to live just a little longer and admire this despicable world.

It was impossible to foresee all this in detail. But it could be assumed that the rejection privileges will end in something terrible. And the aristocrats foresaw this. And they knew it. And none could then explain why it was necessary to take a suicidal step. None of those who renounced privileges with delight, would not have done this if he had been alone. Each individually - against, all together - for. As we have at the general meeting.

The assembly is noisy, the carriage is roaring, it demands new restrictions for itself.

Captain Sasha Yurin approves the initiative of the masses. It is beneficial for him, otherwise he will run away a sailor in some Naples, but who will they pull for logging? That's right, the captain. And further many. So it is better not to go ashore in the ports of other people's team. And the captain is always away Maybe. On business. I wonder how the secret passengers leave the ship? And where? And how on him fall? Another point is incomprehensible to the captain: during the invasions of customs officers and enemy police secret passengers from corridor "A" obviously go to some kind of hiding place, which is still under the design is provided for, during the construction it is worked out soundly, as we sometimes know how to do. But why not at the moment when the police and customs officers come on board a very simple procedure? Why would the captain from his cabin into the speaking tube, to no one Personally, without addressing, one would not say: "Atas!" Can't the captain be trusted with this? One Throw a word down the chimney, and give the passengers more time to clean up after themselves, hide in a hiding place... They are calmer and more secure ...

Noisy assembly. The captain's eyes shine like the lights of the lighthouse of Alexandria: well done, Guys! I love you for your communist enthusiasm! For awareness! There is nothing for you on the shores of strangers do! You do not need the Turkish coast, and you do not need Africa! It's more fun on your own ship. Here we have portraits of comrades Lenin and Stalin hang. Are there such portraits in that smelly Naples? Yes there is nothing there except pornography. Is a Soviet sailor interested in naked women?

The captain also blooms because it illuminated him. We are always happy when, putting together the facts are different, suddenly we get an unexpected result. Revealed to Sasha Yurin: no need for secret passengers an alarm. Not needed because at any given moment, apparently, they know exactly what is happening on the ship ... Because they listen to all the rooms. Because they can't listen!

The night is black. The meeting of the Amurles crew makes noise. And the border guards are scouring the ship. Completed. We left. Now another car is coming. Big. Like a funnel. Same with border guards. Caps green. Canvas raincoats. For some reason, these bales and boxes are being loaded. In large quantities. Leads loading comrade Shirmanov. He is wearing a border coat. And his people too. Objective: Remove everything corridor "A", put the premises in order, change the bed linen, fill the tank fresh water, check the operation of communications, wiretapping and signaling, the operation of locks and constipation in caches, and if necessary, carry out minor repairs, load passengers' luggage, stock food. Finished quickly. Now three more emerge from the car. Also in caps, too in a tarp. They go up the ladder. One is huge. The second one is smaller. The third one is very small. Like three bears.

Their path is to corridor "A". Entered. Undress: Holovanov, Messer and Nastya the Firebird. Shirmanov accepts caps and canvas coats, reports to Kholovanov about the readiness of caches "Amurles" for the transfer of an undercover group, shakes hands, wishes success. Three remain in the corridor "A". The heavy door locks them like in a submarine, locks click. Shirmanov's group leaves ship. Shirmanov passes caps and raincoats to an assistant, he himself calls Captain Yurin: inspection the ship is completed, there are no complaints, happy journey, proudly carry the flag of the homeland of the world proletariat across oceans and seas.

The captain shakes the hand of the border guard and, changing his face, to the team:

"K-o-nchai democracy!"

Roared "Amurles" long and joyfully. And went into the fog.

CHAPTER 27

1

Running away from afar, the cold waves beat mercilessly against the side of the Amurles, as if a brutal boxer finishes off an exhausted opponent. The depths of the Arctic are calling a timber carrier with crew and secret passengers to the calm and silence of the depths.

Creaks "Amurles" bulkheads, groans. But it keeps. Get out on the boat balcony - horror. Foam from the waves - like from a mad stallion. A hurricane spins gray water, whirlpools draws into the bottomless depths and throws out new millions of tons from the depths, mixing with foam and wind. A snow charge covered the timber truck with a wet blanket and blinded the windows. If some a fool can't sit inside, then you need to fasten your chain. Each wave, like a collapse in a mine, will break and crush anyone who chose the wrong side for walking. The air is fresh, full of water. The ocean is roaring, angry.

If you get drunk on ocean air, you fall asleep. But there is no time for passengers to sleep. Classes continue. Messer's task - without wasting time on the transition, the preparation of the heir to the throne Spanish continue. The task of the Firebird is to listen to the instructor, to gain intelligence. Dragon - Heat plant a bird, return to Moscow himself, but not on the Amurles, but by another means, another way. At the crossing, the task of the Dragon is to ensure the safety of the infanta.

"Come on, let's hear what our valiant crew is talking about. ...

2

For three, six double cabins. Space. Also a corridor with two turns and two boat balconies: if the wind tries to break the starboard side, go out for a walk on the left. AND vice versa. In any situation - one balcony without a hurricane wind, without crazy waves.

Nastya breathes in the ocean wind - and into the shower. With a hot pressure, fatigue knocks itself off and sleep deprivation. And ready to work again:

- Hello, sorcerer!

- Hello, Firebird!

3

Before going out to sea, the sorcerer once again went to Stalin:

"She won't make a queen.

- Let's see.

- Let's argue!

- Let's.

- For what?

- The loser in the presence of all members of the Politburo will crawl under the table and himself loudly and distinctly call him a goat.

- It's coming.

They hit on the hands. And now, for a day now, the ocean of the sorcerer, the Dragon and the Firebird have been chatting in bowels of the timber carrier. To the work entrusted by the sorcerer - with all honesty. He would also like from this girls make a queen. There will be more than one monarch on this planet. Less bureaucracy will become. One monarch replaces at least a million thieves-bureaucrats. 'Cause the monarchy to the people cost less. And for the first time she stirred in the sorcerer: after all, she could turn out to be a monarch. Then the sorcerer will have to admit himself publicly as a goat. It's nothing. If it makes sense, then the sorcerer is ready to take shame on his head. And if not, then Comrade Stalin publicly will call. That's some fun...

This opportunity, however, is fading away every day. The sorcerer felt perseverance in the student, which he did not expect. The schedule was not set by a sorcerer, she herself set: five hours work, two hours for sleep and all sorts of personal needs, half an hour walk on the boat deck above thundering waves, for another half an hour a hot shower of unbearable pressure. Comes out ruddy like an apple bulk, and again ready to repeat the entire work cycle. Every day there are three shifts. Total of twenty-four hours - fifteen hours of work, six hours of sleep and personal time, one and a half an hour above the waves and an hour and a half in the shower.

And work again

"Where, sorcerer, shall we begin today?"

"Let's start by discussing your essay on how to subdue a hundred million free citizens. Frankly speaking, I didn't understand everything in your essay.

- It's simple. Here is the parade on Red Square. Lines of twenty people. In every box — ten ranks, two hundred men. And these boxes - beyond the horizon. And all the step is minted uniformly - admire. Each box is trained for two months to a seventh sweat for the May parade and more two months for October. This is not to mention the daily, all year round, drill, which goes beyond parade training. And this is not only in Moscow. It's ubiquitous. Do you need to to walk in front of a war, in boxes of two hundred people? Is it necessary to tear your legs higher in war belts, is it necessary not to bend your knees and pull your socks off? Is it necessary to stick out the chest with a wheel and lift the chin above the nose? Why are we doing all this nonsense? And that's the point. to force thousands of people to act simultaneously and uniformly, obeying an order, and not common sense.

- You can't argue with that.

- That's all. It is necessary to transfer such exercises to hundreds of millions of people.

"Forcing civilians to walk in marching order?"

- Of course not. I'm talking about content, not form. The main thing is that the exercises are stupid and hundreds of millions of people acting at the same time. Gotta make them do stupid things regularly.

- And you came up with such nonsense?

- It's simple. It is possible to force the entire population of the Earth to translate twice every year clock hands.

- What motivates it?

- Announce that energy is saved in this way.

But she doesn't save?

- Of course not. The main consumers of energy are factories. We move the arrows forward or ago, factories would consume the same amount of energy. The main consumer of energy is transport. Let's translate the arrows or not, the transport will still consume what it needs. required. The main consumer of energy is coal mines. It's always dark there. Started working - turned on the energy. Finished - turned off. What difference does it make, an hour earlier or an hour later? The main consumers of energy are lighting of streets and roads. When it's dark, turn on the light, when it's light, turn off. If the arrows are translated, what will change?

"But people consume part of the energy in their homes.

- Right. Less than one percent. And not all of this percentage goes to lighting. Soon the time will come when people will have electric irons and electric meat grinders, think of the fact that everyone in the house will have a telephone, radio and electric cinema. Translate the arrows or do not translate, this does not change the energy consumption. Yes, and with lighting of apartments the same thing: in the summer it's so bright in the mornings that you still don't need electric light, even at five Get up at least at ten o'clock. And in winter it's so dark that you still can't do without light, like you. don't turn the hands on the clock.

- Do you think that there will be no benefit from the translation of the arrows?

- There will be harm. Big harm.

"And no one will object?"

The crowd is incapable of thinking. The crowd will take it for granted and will create for itself Problems. As soon as we introduce a dozen of such stupid exercises for the population of the Earth, and that's it. meekly obey, we will own the world.

she can turn out to be a lady. What a beautiful idea: to make billions of people create stupidity contrary to their interests and common sense.

5

The captain of the timber carrier Sasha Yurin was left alone in his cabin. He walks from corner to corner. By myself speaks. Like a scientist cat.

6

Makar rolled over on the other side. Mumbling in his sleep. The lattice cage melted by itself an elevator that flies into a pool of water. Instead, a blue-eyed girl again who is killed by Holovanov. Then in a dream - everyday affairs: a weapon system with a strange the name SA. Everything can be improved. We have no barriers either at sea or on land. Progress endless. Especially in a dream. In a dream, our consciousness breaks out of the cage of everyday conventions and walks free. Brilliant inventions are born in a dream. Is it possible improve SA? Can! It's all about the bullet. It has a ceramic core. At the collision of an armor-piercing bullet or projectile with armor is instantaneous and terrifying heating at the point of contact, the armor is melted, but also the projectile as it penetrates the armor melts itself, turning into a hot soft mess. To prevent this from happening, the projectile make it tough. Does not help. Then - a ceramic core! The armor heats up at the moment impact, becomes soft as butter, and the hard ceramic core goes through the armor like a knife.

It was here that the discovery was waiting for its discoverer. Makar even groaned in his sleep. To to penetrate armor, refractory metals and ceramics are needed. But we don't have to break through the armor, and dog heads of enemies. But their heads are not armored! Enemy head anyway will break if it is blurted out with something weighing 64 grams at a speed of a kilometer per second. When talking about the head, armor penetration is not the main requirement. She is not needed at all.

The main thing is that other enemies do not find the bullet later and do not guess what it is It happened. Now I have to shoot, with a large body of water in the background, so that an armor-piercing bullet, shattered her head, flew further and drowned. But you can make it so that SA weapons can be will be used not only for targets against the background of a reservoir. For this, the bullet must not be hard, not refractory, but, on the contrary, liquid! Eureka! It is so simple. Let it be thin metal shell, and inside - a metal core, but of a metal that melts easily. From shot, from friction against the walls of the bore, from air resistance in flight, the external shell, and the inner one will turn into a liquid.

Such a bullet will blurt out the enemy in the head, break it into shards, into fragments and splashes, but also itself it will shatter into tiny droplets! Then shoot in any situation, and no one ever

will not determine why the enemy's head suddenly burst.

So: the bullet must be hard, it is convenient for storage and transportation, but after shot, leaving the bore, in flight, it must warm up and become liquid. Not all: the inside is liquid, and the thin shell is solid.

To fill the bullet will go two metals - gallium and indium. It is necessary to choose such a composition an alloy that will give a melting point between forty and fifty degrees Celsius.

This will be the desired mixture: we load a solid bullet, and a liquid bullet flies to the target. In a shell.

For a thin shell, gold is best suited: the metal is heavy, soft, but durable. The golden shell can be turned almost into a film. Then in flight, cutting through the air, a bullet will change its shape like a falling drop.

It is necessary for Makar to report all this to Holovanov. It is a pity that the invention is secret. Not for him you get a Nobel.

But you can get the Stalin Prize ...

7

The cabins of the Amurles were prepared, as it were, for foreigners. And we love foreigners more than myself. You sit down in Leningrad on a white ship - let the foreigners go ahead. They are honored and respected. You arrive in New York: the citizens of America have an advantage - again we are in the cold. For foreigners we have the best restaurants and hotels. We let foreigners in front of us everywhere. Because and here, on the timber carrier, comfort was created to the limit. Nastya appreciated at first sight both soft skin and carpets, and noble bronze, and the inexpressible light of the ship's cabin. So I would swim all my life to horizon, so it would sway on the waves, so it would listen to the rustle of raindrops through the porthole and the impact of ocean waves on the steel sides.

Classes with a sorcerer - a series of continuous. Short nap, walk, long shower and again classes. The Dragon visits them at the light. For now, he has the least worries. Because on it kitchen duties: cut sausage, cans of soup, stew and porridge to open, heat, cook, fry, set the table, splash yourself and the sorcerer in cups.

— Hey, psychologists, I have an unsolvable problem.

“Report, Dragon.

— I constantly listen to the whole crew.

“Would you like to guess, Dragon, what the crew is talking about?” About grandmothers.

- Right. About what else?

- So what's the problem?

- The problem is that Captain Yurin - he, like me, Alexander Ivanovich - when one is left, speaks to himself.

"It happens to all of us. And regularly. What is Captain Yurin talking about in loneliness? Also about women?"

- That's the problem, it's not about women. The captain must have gone mad.

- Do you want, Dragon, I can guess what he is talking about alone?

Guess, sorcerer.

- It's simple. I'm sure my student can guess too. What do you say, Anastasyushka?

- It's easy to guess. If Captain Yurin, left alone, talks to himself not about women,

It means he makes patriotic speeches. Right?

- Exactly! He speaks as if from a podium. He speaks as if at a party meeting. crazy

crazy? It is clear that in the presence of the crew, only the right speeches need to be spoken. But left alone...

- I would make a diagnosis like this: Captain Yurin is smarter than the others in the crew. Nobody but him guessed that the ship was completely tapped, because in a close circle or alone people say all sorts of nonsense. And the captain of the "Amurles" Yurin Alexander Ivanovich realized that the ship - unusual, that even at the project stage he was given some secret functions, on such a ship could not do without listening. Realizing that they are eavesdropping, you can be silent all the time. But one can speak, but only what is addressed to the ears of the eavesdropper. Captain Yurin says so, so that you, the eavesdropper, enter propaganda nonsense into the protocol as his most secret thoughts. That's right, sorcerer, I understand the situation?

Bravo, Infanta.

CHAPTER 28

1

The stars in the sky are ice fire. The sky is black, the sea is black. Stars in the sky, stars in the sea. The waves are splashing. There are no stars ahead. From this it follows that ahead are either clouds or cliffs. close the sky. Here you can hear the surf. The surf rustles with small pebbles. It's time. Shredded Dragon an inflatable boat with a knife, ripped open its sides and belly, they were picked up by a cold sloping wave. It lifted the Dragon with the Firebird and lowered it, and lifted it up again. Scary in the black sky, in the black wave. Again raised them and lowered, here and the bottom underfoot. A wave without excessive ferocity towards the shore pushes. Came out.

Somewhere far away "Amurles" draws a phosphorus sea, goes away from the island. It's warm there comfortable, hot shower, hearty food, warm bed, soothing blue light corridors, cabins, calling for rest, and there are smart books, and programs on all radio channels for every taste. And here Cold. If you don't swim in the sea at night, then maybe nothing. And if from the piercing wind yes from there is shelter in the cold fog, then you can also live. And so they sailed together on a deserted wild beach - no tent for you, no blanket, no raincoat. In case the police get attached: here, they say, we bathe at night, we dilute our bathing with love. Oh no, we are not drug dealers row. God forbid. And not spies.

And we don't have any money. So-so. Penny. Pesetas your way. And the passports - here they are, French, in a rubber envelope so they don't get wet. Yes, a silver flask. That's all. romance, one word. Russians. From Paris. The White Guards. Dads and moms from the damned Bolsheviks, so that they ok, they ran away. And we are dissolute, carefree youth. We don't care about politics. Not at home at night sitting.

But there was no coast police nearby. Raster Dragon Nastya. She chatters her teeth.

The landing is proceeding without interruption. "Amurles" in the Mediterranean deviated from the route, running extinguished the lights, in the dark, without dropping anchors, just held the diesel near the Balearic Islands, near the largest of them, near the island of Mallorca. According to the crew, the order: do not stick out, do not yell, put out the fires. And a secret rumor was started: secret hydrographic surveys near the fascist coast.

In those moments of stopping, the sorcerer Nastya squeezed his hand: don't get caught! Embraced the Dragon: take care of her!

Night - it seems that someone planned it by order for disembarkation. Darkness, wind, waves, stars shine, but the wind will obviously soon overtake the clouds, and the rain will hit. True, the waves here are not at all the same as in Norwegian Sea. And not the same as in White. Here the waves are softer, and warm here. For those who have a blanket. It's just that everything was planned in the plan: we disembark at midnight, wait on the shore, in the morning we sit on first bus. Everything was foreseen, except for the cold. Nastya is trembling, three of her alcohol or not three. Gave her

Dragon sip. It helps a little. The trembling subsides for a minute and shakes again. She has it for some reason
Now this is the reaction. Once fell in October to swim across the Volga. At night. And in October on the Volga
- not a resort. Not Mediterranean. After that, she shakes from cold night baths. Sissy. twisted
The dragon pulled his head like a good dog with his nose, smelled the fresh resin. What is pitched on the seashore?
Of course, fishing boats. Forward, infanta!

We thought that it was nearby, but we walked at least a kilometer along the coast. We walked, walked, but the boats on
found the shore. Those that have recently been covered with pitch are not interested. Your head will hurt. yes new boats
and they may be under supervision ... Why disturb people. Where they have fished for centuries, next to
new boats must be old ones, abandoned. Sees the Dragon in the dark, like a cat. Yes
tapping his feet. Found. The boat lies on the outskirts upside down, old, smelling of salt, the bottom
broken. Get in. Get warm. Under the boat, as in a house, the wind does not bother.

Nastya climbed in, huddled into a ball, hugged her knees. There would now be a fire to kindle, as taught,
without matches, only to attract attention is impossible. We must do without fire. Missing Dragon for minutes
five. Returns with a huge sail. This is for you and a featherbed, and a pillow, and a mattress.

2

Before him again floats a huge, whistling, growling, roaring Berlin circus... The sorcerer
majestically lowers her hand, and silence descends with it, enveloping everything and subduing everyone ...
The last question of the program. Thousand hands. The sorcerer led the audience to the brink of insanity. Seems,
between him and the audience slip, sagging, discharges of monstrous force, as between the earth and
sky, illuminating everything around and crushing everything that gets in the way ... So, the last number of the program,
the last question in the last issue... The question has already been asked. The question is simple: about a great future
Germany, led by her great son Adolf Hitler. The crowd already knows the answer. Crowd
already opened her mouth in readiness to yell. The crowd has already spread their hands in readiness for a thunderous applause.
to drop the doors and windows of the circus. The answer will plunge the circus into a frantic, seething, seething delight...
The sorcerer had already shouted out that provocatively jubilant answer, but became thoughtful.

— No, no, let me think... Let me think...

The crowd stirred. She whispered. The sorcerer looks around in confusion. Some kind of stranger
knowledge that does not belong to him, he understands: not everything is so rosy in the future of Germany ...

We entered 1939. This year will bring great victories to Germany...

The sorcerer immediately seemed to be hoarse. There is no triumphant joy in his voice.

We are living out the last months of peace. The war will start this year. Big war. The most
big war. It's a good start for Germany. But it will end badly.

The sorcerer looks at the floor. The sorcerer speaks slowly and quietly. Everyone hears him.

Adolf Hitler will go east. And there he breaks his neck ... And there he breaks his neck - for some reason quietly

repeated the sorcerer.

The crowd falls into a thunderous silence.

The sorcerer somehow lost looked around, bowed to the audience with a half bow, as if apologizing for an unfortunate phrase, and in oppressive silence he went behind the curtain.

He walked past a dazed policeman with a baton. The policeman recoiled, not knowing how to do... Behind the sorcerer, the crowd was still silent for at least a full minute. For this minute Rudolf Messer took off his coat and hat from the carnation and went not to the artistic exit, but to central. It was then that he was overtaken by a wild roar and stomping ...

The sorcerer figured it out himself, or someone told him from above, but he roared with a furious cry, squeezed fists, ran ahead of the roaring, shouting curses. And towards the crowd already rushing sweeping trotting with the transition to a gallop mounted police. Police whistles are already blowing ears whistle. Already the sirens of cars flooded the street. Some are already being taken. They are already hammering with clubs.

- Where is he?! - the crowd yells.

- Where is he?! - Messer yells. Law-abiding burghers brutalized, destroying everything that is on the way comes across. Someone was identified nearby, and immediately there was a tangle of flashing arms and legs. And wail over ball:

- Oh, Messer!

And the handsome blond-haired man pulled Messer by the sleeve and his mouth was already gaping for a scream. But don't scream more. Therefore, he does not scream because he does not yet believe in his luck as a discoverer. Each discoverer has five seconds is required in order to first enjoy the discovery itself, and only then announce opening to the whole world. Messer, for self-defense, would use sorcery to hide behind his own. But in such For a moment, he forgot about sorcerer's inclinations. But what I didn't forget about was my fist, not that that pood, but weighty. And while the handsome man reveled in his discovery, while stretching his jaw for a cry of victory, Messer cracked him not like a sorcerer, but like a worker-peasant. Between the eyes. He cracked so that for a moment the black sky above the capital of the Third Reich lit up and brightened up. From such a blow, the handsome man was bent and carried back with a turn. And immediately flashed over him fists and umbrellas:

- Oh, Messer!

The sorcerer did not put on a hat below the eyebrows, did not hide his nose in his collar, but yelled louder others:

— Here he is, Messer! Beat him! Bring it to the police! Here's another one!

Then there were long days and nights. There was a nasty rain and snow. There were dripping drops snowflakes. And arrest.

The sorcerer saw clearly the corner of the wet house and the Rottweiler, the bitch, and could no longer be silent - screamed, screamed.

And woke up ... Heart is pounding, teeth are chattering, breathing breaks. Calming fear, carefully the sorcerer looked around, listened. Where is it? Darkness.

Rain knocks on iron, as then in Berlin. Flickering blue light. It was the same in Berlin. From police cars. And there was a green flicker. From a traffic light.

And it was cold there. And it's warm and dry here. Somewhere waves on the iron: boo-boo. And the rain doesn't iron signboards rumbles - on the deck. This is Amurles. This is corridor "A". Dragon and Firebird sorcerer conducted. Now there is only one left in the corridor "A". In his cabin.

Where are they now, Nastya with the Dragon?

3

Rain rumbles on the bottom of the longboat, like the 4th proletarian cavalry named after a comrade Voroshilov's division is moving along Khreshchatyk.

The firebird trembles with its teeth in time with the rain. And the Dragon too. It's time to get on the sail wrap up, keep warm. There are very few clothes on them, but those clothes are soaked with sea water and rain. In an instant you will wet the sail.

- You know, girlfriend, we have a special task with you. Come on, don't be shy. In the dark I am everything I still don't see. Undress all. I will wring out your clothes and mine, and you warm yourself in the sail. And I have a place gray

Nastya clung to him, naked, trembling. And he hugged her. Warmer for both.

He told her: "Sleep." She told him: "Your lips are salty. Me too?"

Nastya is warming up. Together with the warmth, slowly, and then more and more quickly spreads in her body the familiar irresistible desire for something. The desire to bite, kiss and scratch the hated the person who hugs her. And she kisses his lips. And bites them.

The dragon doesn't resist. Nastya pressed a little on her shoulder and turned him over on his back. So her easier to kiss. He doesn't resist. But he doesn't respond to kisses either.

It overwhelmed her with anger, the ferocious primal anger of a fluffy polar dog. Now something she understood the reason for that ferocity: the white dog demanded love. And Nastya demands the same. She doesn't part of the love of the Dragon is needed, not a piece, not a fraction, she needs him all and forever. 'Cause bite she began it, seemingly gently, but quickly reached a frenzy. He squeezes her, holds her back. AND compresses his lips. To not return her kisses. He knows that first you need to bring her to complete frenzy. He loves to infuriate. And he can.

And one more reason not to return her kisses: he realized that she simply did not know how kiss. Nobody taught her. You should always learn to kiss. Kissing is art. Need a lifetime master this art and hone. And no matter how much you study, there are always inexhaustible possibilities. for limitless improvement. He knew that she was a capable student. He knew that she would

to comprehend the technique faster than any of those with which the Dragon is this most difficult of subjects taught. And taught to many. He learned from each and taught each. But not able, which one must train from the beginning, from scratch, he met for the first time. That was what excited him.

And he stretched out the pleasure, reveling in her ineptitude.

The sea has gone wild. Waves crash into the shore. The wind whistles. Water cascades from the sky... And they got warm. AND even hot together under sail. Brutal, like a stormy Mediterranean, the girl hugs, covers Sasha Dragon with hot legs, passionately squeezes with an energetic jerk, as if reluctantly lets go and again, as if exploding all over, compresses.

The dragon slightly responded to her vicious bite and realized: it's time.

With his right hand, he squeezed her cheeks, parting her lips wide. Squeezed to a groan. She understood it as protective technique of a sambo wrestler against her bites. She was wrong. He prepared something else for her. And at the same time she was right. He was really tired of her clumsy kisses and quite skillful bites. He could only protect himself from her persistence with a kiss. Nature rewarded him with boundless generosity. He knew how to give. Give kisses.

She suddenly fell into the abyss. Like a skilled dancer, he pulled her along with him. He took her to kiss like a dance. And she boldly followed him, as one follows a skilled man, trusting in art and experience. He gave her that kiss that was destined to be remembered. He gave it away with royal generosity. And in gratitude for the gift she wanted to scream, she wanted to share with him, to tell how she well, she needs to tell him that in the movies they kiss in a completely different way, which she did not even foresee, that it could be so... She didn't know how. Words were not enough for her to express her delight. And she understood that she still wouldn't have enough words, so she decided to just say that she was fine, that he had very much even it turns out that he continued. But even this is not given to her to say - her mouth with a kiss filled with a kiss that never ends.

And then she expressed everything at once with one deep inner groan.

4

Captain Yurin Alexander Ivanovich ordered to deviate from the route and hold diesel at the appointed time at the appointed point. They also explained to him: hydrographic research. Who conducts those studies and why, they did not explain to him: do what is ordered! The captain counted out the prescribed minutes, returned to the bridge with the navigator and helmsman and, not including navigation lights, led the timber truck on the right course.

5

He woke her up at dawn. They had thirty minutes to sleep. Just fell asleep, hugging, - climb. He woke up on his own. He always woke up minute by minute at the very moment that

assigned to myself when falling asleep.

She also has this ability. But she herself did not wake up because, falling asleep, she completely forgot about the secret mission, and that she was on a foreign, enemy shore - she generally forgot about everything. She did not wake up because she did not ask herself any time for awakening. If not for the Dragon, she would have slept in languor until evening. Now she only fell asleep, only fell asleep. The Dragon wakes her up, she turns away from him, fights back:

- Sashenka, maybe that's enough already, huh? Well, leave me alone... Well...

The Dragon shakes her by the shoulders: stop sleeping, it's time to leave before they catch her.

She woke up. Hard. She should sleep now. She would like a cabin on the Amurles. And to hell sorcerer's science, you still can't learn everything. In the shower for a couple of hours and sleep, sleep, sleep ...

- Hey, wake up.

She looked out from under the boat: damn reality, it was so good in a dream. Here it is necessary to tell the truth: on the islands of the Mediterranean sometimes it is also disgusting. Rarely, but it happens. The sky is low. The clouds are broken. Cold wind. The rain is vile. The waves crash on the shore.

The dragon smiles

- You are evil, Nastenka, for love.

- You, too, Sasha, are not very kind.

And they both laughed.

- Thank you, Dragon, for landing, for this night. You brought me to my domain. I love you something to reward. How?

The Spanish infanta glanced at the empty wild beach. She needs a weapon. Sword. No here weapons. Swords do not roll on white sand. There are only boats upside down. OK. Raised rusty the anchor is three-legged: three steel rods are welded together, and the sharp ends are bent to the sides. By our cat is called.

- There is no sword. Nothing. You distinguished yourself, Dragon, in the sea field, my safety provided, landed me on my lands. Therefore get on your knees.

Dragon didn't understand. But he obeyed. Whether in jest or seriously. He got down on one knee. A hefty man, he is on his knees higher than Nastya.

Nastya put a three-legged anchor on his right shoulder, shifted it to his left and again - to right. If you look from the side, you won't understand what's going on here: wet ragamuffins with an anchor in the pouring rain, in the gusty wind.

- I pity you, Dragon, with a knighthood and baronial dignity. I command henceforth call you baron... What are the islands called? Balearic?... Called Baron Balearic.

This is where your possessions will be. Kiss the hand, baron.

It went on without a hitch. The bus rattling with all the pieces of iron picked them up in the morning and delivered to Palma - to a city washed with romance. He took her by the hand, led her into the web of streets. Those streets are three or even two meters wide, and there are too many shops there. Here I will allow a good word about those stores say. Everything's there. So it lies straight, waiting for you. True, they do not give for free. Useful advice: it is better to go to those stores with money. Without money - one disorder. Into one moment from black envy you can turn into a communist.

The Spanish Infanta and the Baron of Balearic have no money at all. But an intelligence meeting is scheduled. Chekists call such a meeting instantaneous. In military intelligence, it is called instant meeting.

The main thing is that someone should choose a good place for such a meeting in advance. Where there is an instant meeting, there must be a lot of people, there must be a clock on the wall to both participants in the meeting should not look at their watches all the time and that both of them on the same time to navigate. Then everything depends on the accuracy and discipline of both.

The place is chosen well: the entrance to the huge store "Ga-ran". Doors open exactly nine and suck in the crowd. Above the entrance is a clock. The meeting is at nine zero two. A little gape The dragon at the entrance, waiting for the minute hand to touch the second dash, went into the crowd. Crowd compresses hundreds of people into a single lump and immediately spreads it to the sides and floors. admired Dragon goods overseas and went out through the emergency exit.

During the disembarkation, you can not have anything extra in your pocket. It also happens: caught at night on the beach deserted coast police, a half-naked couple, and she has nothing in her pockets except passports ... Also, of course, suspicious: at night they walk along the beach with passports. But it's still better if they get caught with passports than without them. But if there is a lot of money, then complications arise. No, a patrol of suspicious people will not be dragged to the police station, not at all. Everything is easier: shot in the back of the head, tied to the feet with a stone and thrown into the sea. And the money is brotherly. Difficult times in Spain. The police are not paid salaries for six months. And the cops too people to a certain extent. They want to eat too...

Given this circumstance, it is recommended to carry out a landing without money. But when the landing was successful, when it was possible to sneak into the bustling city unnoticed and in the crowd get lost, then money is required. Urgently. And in large quantities. That's why auxiliary agents are recruited in advance.

An auxiliary agent can invest money in a cache, or maybe at an instant meeting hand over. 93 percent of the failures in undercover intelligence are in touch. On contacts. Because contact should be such that no one spotted it. Even those around. The dragon fell into a huge shop with the crowd together. He tumbled in with empty pockets, but came out with a relieved soul, with

weighted pocket. And who is in his hand at nine o'clock and two minutes in human pandemonium he slipped a tight wallet, it was not given to me to know. And detect instant hand contact in the crowd when everyone tightly pressed against each other, no one will burn out.

The second phase also went without a hitch.

While the Dragon made instant contact, the Firebird waited around the corner. Now have a drink for a cup of coffee, give the Firebird a passport and money, wish good luck and leave one.

The restaurant is quite small. Tables right on the sidewalk along the street. Past the shaft knocks down. The Spanish police do not care about skinned foreigners at the round table of a cheap restaurant. The police have their own concerns. The police are ordered to survive.

"So far so good, Infanta.

"Thanks to your protection, baron," Nastya smiles broadly and joyfully.

The Dragon gave her one night, which she dreamed of a thousand nights. In the case, the Dragon turned out to be even a little better than in my dreams. Because Nastya touched his hand as if by accident, squeezed it and let go. And he touched her hand with his hand, squeezed it powerfully and gently. Nastya knows: he has a lot girls in special groups, many outside special groups, many in foreign embassies and distant countries - also a lot. Only he understands not with his mind, but with his heart that he magnetized Dragon. Forever. Let him walk with diplomatic Germans, with paratroopers and saboteurs, with future queens and queens. Let be. And the Dragon will not go anywhere from her.

And he understands it. He is now on his way to Marseille. Then to Paris, and from there to Moscow via Berlin. Lots of things to do along the way. And many women are waiting for him in Marseille, Paris, Berlin. And in Moscow too. And in Moscow region.

Sad dragon. How long was Nastya the Firebird next to him, and he opened in her explosive love temperament only now, when it's time to say goodbye. There were many of them, but this one was not met. He searched all his life, and she was next to him.

- I will never forget you.

He paused and said what he had never said to anyone:

- I love you.

Nastya lowered her eyes: should I believe the words?

- We'll be apart for a while. I travel around the world a lot, I will visit you sometimes, Zhar bird.

Nastya squeezed his hand:

- We won't have long to wait. Soon the world revolution. Soon our tanks will come to France, in Spain. I will become queen. I will make you a duke. And I won't let go of myself.

He smiled.

- Stop talking about it. Better come back soon. I'll be waiting for you, Firebird.

Her eyes darkened. So blue sapphires sometimes darken to complete blackness:

"Baron, I don't understand... Should I go back?" Where to return?

— To the Soviet Union.

"I have no intention of going back, Baron. This is my kingdom. Soon Spanish Soviet the socialist republic will become part of the Soviet Union, and then we will only change the signs: The Spanish Kingdom in the World Empire!

Nastya, you take everything too seriously.

Indomitable fury flashed in her eyes. It was then that she said bold and offensive words to him. And it so happened that the tram rumbles past. Without wasting more words, Nastya jumped into the back footboard and did not look in his direction anymore.

The Dragon rushed after her, but restrained himself. One move, one word, bind police officer. Here he is, next to him. And the Dragon has a pack of money in his pocket. Right here in the police station will be taken away, the money will be stolen, and they will put him in jail, so as not to make noise. They are able to African colonies to hard labor. On a chain. Posting an article is not a problem. Generally in In the bourgeois world, a terrible law operates: if there was a person, there would be an article.

Dragon's teeth gritted like tram wheels on a sharp bend. I warned you Stalin: it is unpredictable. With her to failure - one step.

And what to do now? She has no money, no passport. Where is she in a strange city? And what should he do?

Decided to wait.

He'll freak out - he'll be back.

7

She left not far. Right around the corner from the steps of the tram jumped off. In crowd got lost. Went round the square and on the other side because of the dirty billboard on The dragon looks.

He is stubborn. He sits like a granite pharaoh on the banks of the mighty Nile at the stone rapids in Aswan. She wanted to approach him, to tell him that he was wrong, that this was not the way to treat the matter. But her pride too. Went to roam the streets. She returned an hour later. Through a hole in the fence The dragon surveys. Sitting dragon statue.

Again Nastya went around the city. She returned three hours later. Legs are buzzing. Sitting dragon in the heat Spanish, imperturbable, like a sphinx in the sand. Looks like he didn't change his posture. Only empty cups coffee in front of him increased. Her heart sank. But she restrained herself.

Wandered the streets again. She was back by midnight. Sitting Dragon. What should he do remains? She turned around and disappeared into the crowd. Ten meters away. She returned decisively. He is not here. Rushed to the right - no. Left - no. And there is no ahead.

It happened to everyone: there is an opportunity for reconciliation - we wag our fluffy tails,
lost the opportunity - sorry.

Nastya did not take offense at anyone in her life. She has a rule: someone caused harm - I'm sorry
his. Or kill. And weak people are offended. They put it on offended horseradish and carry water. Sasha Holovanov,
The dragon, Baron Balearic, did her great harm. She was appointed Infanta, heiress
throne of Spain. But Sasha Dragon treats this without due respect. You have to kill for it.

All day she wandered through the dirty streets to quench her anger. And so the decision was made:
kill him, but pardon. It's easy to kill someone, hard to forgive. Forgiveness takes courage.
She has courage. Decided to be generous. But no dragon. Someone to forgive.

CHAPTER 29

1

The sorcerer does not sleep. Sat. Turned on the light. Back pillows. He extended his hand to the bookshelf. I haven't picked up Mein Kampf for a long time. The sorcerer read many books. He read them quickly and a hundred times. These were either the most beloved, or those that he could not understand. He opened the book on any page and began to read from the sentence that first caught my eye. delved into.

The author of this thick book, Adolf Hitler, struck down the sorcerer with the eleventh chapter of the second part. This chapter was written by Hitler, but the devil clearly stood behind him and led him by the hand. Written chapter above human possibilities. Written by those who are endowed with satanic knowledge, who know the soul of the crowd, knows how to command crowds, who finds the highest pleasure in this. This chapter of the sorcerer is always I re-read it with delight and light envy. Messer knew the rest of the chapters by heart, but did not count who fully understands them. It's time to take this book seriously. He has nowhere to hurry. Soon Naples. After Naples, a long return to Arkhangelsk. No one is chasing a wizard. None hinders. He took out a loaf of bread from the pantry, completely stale for a long journey, twisted it in hand and for some reason sniffed a thick vigorous onion, opened a jar of sprats, cut a piece of lard in thin pink slices, put in front of him a bottle of Peppercorns and a Russian glass of granchak. Poured. Drank. Grunted. I had a bite. Opened Mein Kampf. And deepened.

There is a simple technique for analyzing information. First of all, it is necessary to cleanse the soul from evil. Necessary force yourself not to think about the bad. Freed from evil, even if only partially and temporarily, Let's unfold a transparent dome above us. No, not the dome of the Berlin circus and not the dome of the Moscow one, and not even Samara, which is on the banks of the Volga. It is necessary to deploy a transparent dome through which the sky and stars are visible. It's easy to deploy - you just want to. At first our dome will be small, like an umbrella over your head. Then, over the years of training, as experience is gained, the dome will unfold above itself wider and higher. If you apply enough willpower, then the transparency of the dome will not interfere with either concrete vaults, or overcast clouds, or the bright sun. External conditions are not a hindrance - it can be deployed over your head in a dugout, in a tank, in a cell monastery, in a submarine, in a firing chamber. Focus and expand.

For training, instead of the real situation, you can use any book for analysis. War and Peace, for example. Scroll through it, trying to keep in memory as much as possible. No, not about dots and commas speech. You have to keep the essence. Now we got the object of analysis. Take "War and world" and tear it into pages. Mentally. Nuance for beginners: gutting two at the same time instance. If one, then only half of the pages will be open to our eyes, the other half

information will escape our analysis.

It is this text that must be simultaneously and instantly scattered over the entire dome in an even layer so as to cover its entire surface. You can flip the pages in any order. Especially
Let me emphasize: we are not talking about memorization - only about analysis. To memorize books and libraries - other tricks. Our memory is bottomless and boundless. Any brain can hold any the amount of information without any restrictions. We were just not taught to use our memory, we don't use it. At school, we were not asked to memorize the same "War and Peace", and we, Of course, they didn't teach. But nothing, you can analyze the text even without learning it all by heart. You just have to imagine it.

Now let's rest a moment, take a deep breath, exhale and all the pages with a single effort, with a single impulse of the soul, we will press against the dome so that it sparkles, and, without taking a breath, we will squeeze dome into a single sparkling point. At this moment, in a single moment, you need present the entire content of the book, all at once in all possible and even impossible brightness with the maximum amount of detail. It is necessary to present at once everything that is remembered, as much as possible more vividly, it is necessary to imagine all the heroes at once, all their words and all actions, all pictures and events, you need to see the glitter of bayonets, you need to hear the thunder of cannons and the clatter of hooves, you need to breathe in the aroma of balls and officer drunkenness, one must realize in all depth the unbearable horror of losing at cards family estate and touch the peasant Armenians, one must not only see the hunt for wolves, but to feel it with a wolf's skin, one must enter Moscow, abandoned by the inhabitants, together with Bonaparte and with to sniff with mild anxiety the smell of the first fires, one must freeze on the Smolensk road, one must flee in panic from the battlefield and rejoice at the sight of the banners of the conqueror thrown into the manure. All this must be completed within the shortest possible time. In the moment. And it's not about mentally repeat words and sentences, periods and commas. It's not important. We need to turn words into living pictures into one single picture.

Everyone who was already in the clutches of death, but miraculously escaped from them, tells almost the same thing. They note two points: absolute calm, firstly, and a real flood of information - Secondly. This is exactly the state you need to get into: calmness and instant coverage practically incomprehensible. Between life and death there is a thin boundary layer, here in it and you have to be able to squeeze in.

Many of those who analyze information using the sparkling dome method write with spelling mistakes, punctuation marks, grammar laws, rules and exceptions, but names, dates, numbers are extremely important.

The most difficult thing is to squeeze the dome into a point. For some, the glittering dome shrinks to the size of the table, others - up to an open newspaper. You need not to give up, you need to push strong-willed with an effort, to press until everything turns into a tiny, unbearably bright point. And push off

her. Break away. Get out of that world and into this one. It's difficult. It's as painful as coming up from great depths. The one who returned from there finds it hard to breathe in our world. It breaks into our world. Then his speech is lost, his breath breaks, his eyes darken, he faints. This return fee from the impossible. You just have to get used to it.

The sorcerer is used to it. Today he flattened the transparent dome of Mein Kampf and squeezed it into point of blinding light. It is not at all necessary that after this comes insight, which discovery entails. But something else is indisputable: after such an analysis, a new attitude towards text. There is a feeling of awakening after a prophetic dream.

And our sorcerer gets some kind of nonsense. Subjected the sorcerer to the analysis of "Mein Kampf" and now understands nothing. Why should Hitler go east? Where is this taken from? This is from the book does not follow in any way, even more so from Hitler's speeches. Why did the sorcerer bounce nonsense in Berlin circus? If "Mein Kampf" is compressed into a point, it will turn out: the internal enemy is the Jews, external - French. That's all. Hitler's idea: crush the Jews, crush the French.

In passing in a huge book in one phrase it is said about the lands in the east. Said not like specific task of the current generation, but as a cherished dream.

Hitler thought in centuries and millennia. The lands in the east are a distant target beyond the horizon beacon for future generations. What lands are we talking about? If those lands were given for free Germany, then the construction of roads alone would ruin any Germany. A no conqueror will be able to control those lands without roads ... Control those lands only Genghis Khan could, he did not need roads, he managed without roads. Mein Kampf is not a book about lands in the east, this is a call for liberation from the domination of France-bloodsucker, this is a call to save Germany from the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler came to power under the flag of the struggle against Versailles. Hitler wildly hates France. He must go against France. But for France will speak Britain - together in Versailles they twisted the Germans' arms. And behind Britain is America. By Are all these opponents of Germany to the forces? If Hitler gets involved in a war against France, Britain and America, then Herr Hitler will not be fat, not the lands in the east. And if you go east, then through Poland, and Britain gave guarantees to Poland. Again, France will support Britain. And America.

Twenty-five again. Whatever one may say, in the event of war, Hitler will be the enemy of the whole world.

Mein Kampf is a book against the Jews. Hitler conducts a policy against the Jews inside Germany. Result? The result is the same: America doesn't like it. Both Britain and France. Really Hitler climb against the whole world to fight, and even seize land in the east? This is suicide. Why would he commit suicide?

The sorcerer thought, he was ashamed of his predictions in the Berlin circus.

Each of us in our lives has had a memorable moment at least once: the devil pulled his tongue, froze nonsense and blush all your life. God and the sorcerer are ashamed of their predictions. Sitting alone in a cabin

He finishes the third bottle, bites on an onion.

And one more thing is not entirely clear to the sorcerer: why did Stalin arrange a graduation party? On reflection decided: if for some reason Stalin gathered together for a masquerade ball all future kings, tsars, Kaisers, queens and queens, so there must be something behind it.

2

The Spanish Infanta dissolved in the crooked streets. Lost. Do not look for her in the talkative in the crowd, in the bustle, in the noise and shouting, in the endless basement passages among a million things, among roar and clatter, among the weeping and singing, in the streets, where stray cats plaintively meow with broken tails, with mangy ribs-skeletons, where in smelly nooks and crannies they swarm in puddles of sewage, skinny children, angry as rats, where guitars ring, songs rumble and fun rages, where beautiful girls sell love in abundance at prices affordable to everyone, proudly hiding under luxurious skirts, slender legs, on which the first timid roses bloomed with beautiful roses. syphilis ulcers.

Missing Nastya the Firebird. Carried her through the glitter and roar, through the creak and squeal, through the aromas and the stench, and carried out late at night to a beautiful boulevard right by the embankment. From the boulevard lanes. Just like in the underground city Moscow-600. Only there it is deserted, and here the people are rampant knocks. Shameful girls - flocks. At the corners are swarthy, flexible boys: wide trousers latest fashion. Chest wide open. Chains of gold jingle. There are knives and brass knuckles in the pockets. And muzzles impudent.

Only now Nastya remembered that she had been walking around the stuffy city all day, that she had not slept at night, that she didn't eat anything. And before that, she didn't have a holiday, but endless, intense classes. Tired she. And she has nowhere to go. This is very bad: to be in a strange sweaty city at night without a single peseta in pocket, when no one needs you, when no one is waiting for you anywhere, when no one can help you Maybe.

They paid attention to her. From the doors of taverns and pubs they whistle to her. And Nastya evaluates the situation. What do you need? Need money. And I need pants. She would be a boy to dress up as a ragamuffin so that they don't stare at her, so that they don't caress her with attention, so that glances were not raped.

Where to get money? Where can I get pants on a dark night? Where girls get Spanish money after sunset?

Nastya took a closer look. I made up my mind. We have no other way. Standing against the wall under the lantern girl shame, with breasts like a barrier blocking the way for the people. Right foot - emphasis on the wall. Because the knee is round through the skirt, the slit is moved forward, it blocks the way for the people, like the breast Spanish. Whoever passes, everyone will keep their eyes on those breasts, then they will also appreciate the knee,

Wipe off saliva and knocks past. And next to it is the same shameful girl. Only the chest is steeper, only the knee higher.

Here between the two busty under the lantern Nastya stood up. One likes busty, and the other, maybe girls like very thin ones, without any protruding breasts at all. One eye black, Spanish, burning give and a horse's mane of black hair with a purple tint, and to whom sometimes blue eyes, blond hair and a hairstyle very short for a boy are more to your liking. Spanish women chocolate - a herd, and the little white Slavic girl is the only one ...

Immediately, a flexible dark-haired, like a devil from a box, emerged:

This is my sidewalk. Prices here are three pesetas per session. After each session, two pesetas for me give, take one.

"I'm not on that line. I won't work here," Nastya objects.

- Fine. Then we'll figure it out. And remember me. I own this sidewalk. - slightly turned away flexible swarthy, casually showed the handle of a knife from his pocket.

3

Silver car. The wings are black. "Lagonda" 1938. Experts in the know announced: this is the pinnacle of creation, it is impossible to come up with anything more magnificent than this. Argue with experts - a lost cause. It is to us now that such statements seem ridiculous. But if on that "lagonda" to watch from 1939, from its first half, then doubts will disappear: it's better to be can't do anything.

It was just such a car with an open top that stopped right there in front of Nastya. Beautiful gray-haired uncle driving. Diamond on the hand in a couple of carats. The shirt is silk. The smell of cologne French. He was fed up with busty chocolate Spaniards. And then appeared on the boulevard thin white Slavic girl. I hit the brakes so that the wheels and asphalt squealed below them. And if not for him, then Nastya would have been picked up by the sports "alpha". The "alpha" did not burn out. Nothing, in twenty minutes the girl will be free ...

"Hey, senorita, I give the girls three pesetas. And I'll give you five!

Nastya chuckled.

- One hundred.

There is a rule: everyone gets exactly as much from fate as he asks for. dream about little, little from fate and you will receive. And Nastya the Firebird has a huge swing, and her dreams boundless.

The elegant man in "Lagonda" bared his teeth:

- Well, you have requests! Okay, the devil is with you. Sit down. I will give you a hundred pesetas.

4

Ran out of the city. Turned elegant from the road to the pebbles to the sea. The flashlight lit up.

He counted out ten large blue papers from the crocodile skin purse. Handed over to Nastya. Here we need special emphasize: today a hundred pesetas is dust in your pocket. But those were other times.

They got out of the car. And again, it should be noted that in those days to create love in a car, even in the most luxurious, it was not very comfortable. It was then that the French thought of the backs seats to make them recline back.

And the whole world followed the French. So the experts were wrong when they said that there is nowhere else to improve cars. There is where. You may not have thought of it yet.

So, they went out into the night, into the pure wind, into the gentle splash of the sea. Nastya to him:

- Take your pants off.

- No, I'll just let go.

Take it off, I'll buy them from you. Here's an unprecedented price for them - ten pesetas. Come on pants.

Pants elegant does not give. Instead of pants, her hands are drawn to her. Nastya did not understand:

"Stop, amigo, don't grab it." Let's figure it out. You promised me a hundred pesetas? Promised. You give them to me gave. Here they are. Did I promise anything?

He did not understand this argument. And then Nastya gave him in the face. Waited for it to rise and gave again.

5

The Lagonda rolled up to the sidewalk. Not a car - a miracle on wheels. Everything sparkles and shimmers.

A feast for the eyes. The view is spoiled only by the broken muzzle of the driver. Someone decorated it on the first number. Under each eye on a blue lantern, like railway traffic lights on the interweaving of tracks at Kursk railway station, his lips are bloodied, his aquiline nose is crumpled into potatoes in the Russian manner.

A boy in trousers came out of the "Lagonda". Pants - obviously from someone else's ass. And the driver from beaten muzzle jerked off and disappeared around the corner. The visitor looked around. Pants up to the chest girded with a belt and tucked up. He beckoned the flexible, two large silver coins gives:

- I did not work here, this business is not on my line, but since the sidewalk is yours, here are your pesetas.

At first, flexible did not understand, did not recognize Nastya in his pants, but quickly realized, grinned, advised to take off his pants and continue the work.

Nastya objected: I explained to you, I don't work here, this is not my profession.

He beckoned her with a flexible finger:

- Well, let's go around the corner. I'll smash your face.

- But I will answer.

- You?

- Yeah. Shall we collide?

— Fight with a woman? ("Baba" in Spanish is senorita.)

"Can you see that I'm a woman?"

- OK. Went. I'll squash you. And the handsome man went forward, confident in unquestioning obedience.

Nastya is behind him. And right next to the alley - busty girls in a herd, and dirty boys muscular, and every little thing is shabby. Nobody heard the words, but they saw the gestures. By facial expressions, by gestures, the whole street realized: now the magnificent Rodrigo will sour the face of the skinny underfed.

Spain loves spectacle. During the Civil War, all fighting stopped if in Barcelona bullfight. Enemies of all stripes gathered at once in a huge stadium: fascists, communists, anarchists, republicans. Holy law: for the performance - without machine guns, only with machine guns, pistols and rifles. Yes, and nobility of chivalry forbids their use. The rule: do not shoot at each other, do not beat the muzzle, do not throw grenades at the next podium. will run out bullfight, the bullfighter will kill the bull, we will disperse through the trenches, then we will kill each other for health.

Here, of course, is not bullfighting. But nothing. It's still interesting. Now, now Rodrigo will show... He can. The police are not allowed into such alleys, and they don't ask to come here. Because the laws of the fight street style here is not like our barbarians, in the old days they were accepted in Moscow - until the first blood. They beat you to death here. And if we now have the same traditions established, then this is clearly brought to us by the Spaniards.

A place to fight - you can't run away. To the right is a windowless wall. Left wall. Also no windows. Three meters between the walls. One way, the crowd in the alley. And on the other side too. Circle for a fight - three ten meters.

Having a crowd behind you is not the point. Nastya turned her back to the wall. Little whether that? So better. Magnificent Rodrigo - with his back to the other wall. Two meters between them the crowd to the right and left of the fighting.

Rodrigo took a heavy knife out of his pocket, held it up in his hand, and poked it under his fingernail. Crowd watching the knife with a thousand eyes. This is how we are arranged: if Rodrigo got an ax from his bosom - that's all ax attention. But this time the gopor did not happen to him, only a knife, because behind the sparkling each with a blade and watches like a ball on a football field. Good knife. Heavy and sharp. That knife plunged into someone's hearts and throats. And in the back. The crowd understands. And he knows. Rodrigo magnificent for his exploits is known not only on the cheerful boulevard.

The moon on the blued blade flashed, the crowd is waiting for what will happen. While Rodrigo's knife was twirling in his hands, smiled badly, looked at Nastya. And then the people smiled with the smile of a knight noble - they say, I can do without a knife - and lightly tossed his spine to the right. Spine

I picked up the knife on the fly and put it in my pocket. While that knife was catching the spine and putting it in his pocket, all eyes were on were magnetized to him. Only Nastya alone did not give much attention to the knife. She saw a knife did not lose sight, but taught her to look at the weapon only out of the corner of her eye, and all attention to her eyes enemy.

While the knife was flying, the magnificent Rodrigo jerked, pushed with his right foot from the wall - not that flight, not the fall. The weight of a young buffalo, the speed of a cobra. He didn't scold, he didn't threaten. On the public worked. He knew his strength. He knew that he would kill this dirty whore with one blow. But I wanted it kill so that no one can even gasp. So that the crowd does not catch the moment of the murder. To only everyone saw the magical result: here was a skinny ragamuffin in other people's pants, and now there was a corpse at his feet lying around. That's what the feint with a knife is for: you stare at a flying knife, and at this time Rodrigo, a favorite audience, with a terrible blow crushes the hated muzzle.

I knew Rodrigo: it would never occur to anyone later to figure out that this was a woman. About killing one blow in front of the crowd long dreamed of Rodrigo. Until he succeeded. Happened with two blows. And so the opportunity presented itself. Nothing that the enemy is some kind of flimsy. It will be forgotten. But about the fact that there was only one blow, the city will not forget, and at all times the magnificent Rodrigo for that the blow will be remembered.

6

All the secrets of success in business can be expressed in one formula: the ability to work as strangers money. And all the secrets of success in a fight come down to the ability to use the strength of the enemy against himself. The stronger he is, the worse it is for him.

Time stopped for Nastya, and then it went slowly, slowly.

The beautiful face of Rodrigo, beloved by all the girls of the merry boulevard, lit up with a noble smile, I say, and I can do without a knife ... The right hand swam like a swan to the side, fingers opened, the knife separated from the palm of his hand and, tumbling, slowly, slowly, like a balloon, flew into catching hand.

Rodrigo's face twisted... And Nastya just had to blink at that moment. just one for a fraction of a moment her eyes were closed, but she felt, realized that his shadow glided over her, that above her Rodrigo is already flying and his whistling fist floats out from behind his shoulder, ahead of his body...

Nastya did not change the position of her legs, she only sat down a little, turned her body around and pulled back slightly, letting the crushing fist past her face. Fist a millimeter from the nose whistled, and the sleeve lashed painfully over her face, over her eyes, and right next to her ear that fist rammed into brick wall so that the wall trembled. It was a terrible blow. Rodrigo was an experienced fighter fabulous. He knew the psychology of combat: it is necessary to beat so that the fist passes through the enemy.

He beat with the intention of breaking his head and slamming it into the wall. So he screwed up. The gift that

past. From the impact of this crushing crack on two bricks, crumbs and dust particles from cracks piled up.

Rodrigo choked with pain. If the blow were softer, if there were less weight in it, if the speed is not so ... But he beat not only with his fist, not only with his hand - he put the power of everything into the blow young flexible body. It was a blow not so much with a hand, but with a turn of the body, so that the right shoulder jerked far forward, and the left turned and threw back. All was invested in the blow explosive strength of the muscles of the chest, shoulders, back, torso and hips.

We are so arranged: it is better for the body to endure great pain in an unconscious state. There is a limit of pain for everyone, above which consciousness is automatically turned off, cut down, to survive the terrible moment, to let the worst pass by. So punch into the wall Rodrigo chimed in that the pain soared above all limits, measured by nature. Because in that the very moment when the bones of the fist crushed the bricks, the wild impulse, like the recoil in a tank gun, cut the brain, illuminated the head from the inside with a blinding light, and the consciousness faded, went out. From the blow such a magnificent Rodrigo went limp, sagging like a bag, collapsed into the mud, scratching the wall with his teeth.

Nastya has brick dust in her eyes. But he understands that the matter must be completed. Not seeing clearly his neck, more suggesting where she should be, raised her right leg with her knee to her chest and slashed edge of the foot sharply down. It crackled under her.

The crowd gasped, staggered back in both directions of the alley. Nastya turned sharply: who is next?

There were no applicants. One who can capture the imagination of the crowd in word or deed, for you don't have to worry about your safety. The crowd loves these. And protects.

Nastya killed Rodrigo not at all in order to amaze the imagination of the audience. She has a plan it's simpler: she still won't leave here alive, so she decided to take at least one with her to death seize.

Nastya looks into the eyes of one, the other: well, who else? Fly in! Disfigure!

There were none. The crowd looks at her with fear, with reverence. Got Nastya out of her pocket 0 huge pants a new crunchy ten, crumpled in her hand, threw it on the corpse:

This is for his funeral from me.

The Spanish people marveled at the unprecedented generosity. Nastya went away. There is a corridor in front of her. the human in the crowd broke like a crack in front of an icebreaker. Goes. A quiet whisper flies ahead: this is not a caballero, this is a señorita!

CHAPTER 30

1

Reported by Holovanov. He reported without hiding anything: she was unpredictable, she got out from under control, fled, ran without money, without documents, lost like Kashtanka. Where now is, what he is doing is unknown. Doesn't get in touch.

The Dragon knows, delay with the report - execution. He once already hesitated, barely survived. But even if the report is not delayed, then it is not clear how all this can end. During Messer was against the choice, the Dragon himself doubted and abstained, and only Stalin was in favor of Designate the Firebird as an Infanta. The main thing is that Stalin cannot be reminded of this now, otherwise it's immediately against the wall and put.

Stalin turned to the window, threw a word:

- Go.

The Dragon comes out of Stalin's office. The commander of the special group Shirmanov met him. The muzzle is cheeky. Arrest?

However, Shirmanov always has a cheeky face. It is good to work with him while he is in submission, and if you fall into his clutches, then it is not known what grievances he can remember.

It is not clear to the Dragon whether Comrade Stalin will forgive him the escape of the Firebird, but Shirmanov should to shoot, so that in case of arrest, get to the investigation to an unfamiliar executioner, and not to your own favorite student.

2

The Dragon rested his eyes on the ceiling of the monastery. Why Stalin did not give the order to arrest him right out the door? Yes, simply because the unknown is the most painful thing. Waiting for trouble a hundred times worse than the problem itself. Comrade Stalin knows a lot about torment, therefore he is in no hurry, because allows everyone to torture himself. Go and get on your own nerves. What to do? How to dodge? Akazis in such a situation jumped into the window. And Yezhov wrote a letter to Stalin with a proposal valuable ... Yezhov made a mistake: he submitted an idea that someone else could implement. So it is and it happened: the idea of SA weapons is developed by others and for that they receive Stalinist thanks, and no one needs Yezhov, who gave the idea. It is necessary, in order to save oneself, to give Stalin an idea that they will order you to carry it out personally ... What can you think of?

3

The dragon's head is sometimes visited by ideas.

- Comrade Stalin, the test of the SA weapons has been successfully completed. Top leaders of the NKVD were close to the training target during its destruction, but not a single one figured out what it happened. Because SA weapons can be used for combat purposes and not be afraid that the police guess. It all depends on whether someone reveals our secret.

Stalin's tiger eyes rose to Alexander Holovanov:

Who can reveal our secret?

- Comrade Stalin, a limited circle of people knows about the weapons of the SA, and one of them is not our friend. I mean Yezhov. He came up with the idea...

Stalin walked through the office. Knocked out the phone. Nodding:

- I wanted to give Yezhov a couple more months to walk. But he can give someone his idea tell. This cannot be allowed. And the arrest of Yezhov cannot be trusted to Comrade Beria. Yezhov with his secret must not fall into the hands of the NKVD. Comrade Kholovanov, take Yezhov.

The Dragon said that one person in the world can reveal the secret of the SA, and he bit his own tongue, I remembered that there are two such people in the world. The Firebird knows about the SA system. She's out of control. Secret SA weapons can slip out.

So she should be next in line...

4

What to do if there is no money? Seventy-eight pesetas is not a pound of raisins for you, and yet you won't last on them. And you have to live somewhere. And yes, money is more fun. Where can you get them? Question this one is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. To this question, the Marxist-Leninist approach is needed. There are four classics in Marxism-Leninism: comrades Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. How did each of them solve this seemingly easy question?

Marx loved the beautiful life. He needed a lot of money, and never had enough. money he begged from Engels.

Engels also loved a beautiful life. He also needed a lot of money, and he had it. He was simply a capitalist, brutally exploiting the workers, sucking blood from them and drinking it. Therefore, there was enough money for himself and for his sidekick, Marx.

Lenin also needed a lot of money. In the midst of a world war, during a general impoverishment, he not only lived beautifully, but also supported the party with some money, and even released newspapers and magazines under forty-one titles and distributed them free of charge to the crowd. Where is he money did he take it if he himself had never worked anywhere in his life? Money to undermine the country to him German intelligence provided. And yet - Comrade Stalin.

And where did Comrade Stalin get the money? Comrade Stalin robbed banks.

Nastya smiled: there are ways to get money, and she likes the Stalinist way more than others.

Fortunately, she is trained to pick a safe.

5

There is a rumor in the beautiful city: a senorita appeared in Palma in pants. Walking down the street, no one touched. Rodrigo attacked her with a knife. Which Rodrigo? Yeah the one, remember that Eduardos on Plaza Mayor slaughtered. So he also wanted her ... that. So, he rushed at her, jumped ... And he died in jump.

Further, the rumor splits into two options, and both walk side by side, one does not interfere with the other. By In the first version, she killed the magnificent Rodrigo with a glance. What else could she kill? By the second option - the guardian angel covered it, and the other angel, the angel of death, turned the knife in criminal hand and stabbed Rodrigo himself in the throat. With my own knife.

After that, the rumor again merges into one: a rich lord was driving past in a long "Lagonda" (silver car, black wings), stopped, saw a miracle, repented of his sins (for bodily sin, our lords are very weak), wept with tenderness, took out ten thousand pesetas and presented them to the señorita. And she immediately distributed those thousands to the poor ...

Nastya walks around the city. They recognize her. The eyes show:

— What is it?

- Yes, the one in the pants. Grandmothers are baptized when they see her. They are not baptized in our way, in Spanish, bow.

6

Bank robbery must begin with the choice of target. And careful study. It would be nice spread the agent network at the facility so that the agents do not know about each other, so that their messages could be compared.

But in order to select a target with skill and spread an agent network, you need to go to the banks stay closer. But as? Who will hire Nastya, a foreigner without a passport, to work in a bank?

You walk along the central streets of Palma - every step, a commercial bank. Do Nastya nothing but to roam the streets: this bank will not work and this one too. Or rather: they won't take this one and this. Where is the one in which they will take?

Here he is! The choice has been made. Balerika TS. Huge building, massive walls, marble steps, granite columns, cast-iron lions at the entrance lie like sphinxes in the sand. Windows in three heights. Each window is covered with a patterned steel grating, and the bars are as thick as an arm. Bank's name carved with granite letters on the facade. Everything is fine, only the windows are dirty. They obviously haven't been washed in years. Rather, dirty windows are good.

What follows from all this? It follows that the bank is old. Not early. Once a bank

flourished. The building was not bought, but was built specifically for this bank fifty years ago, the name was cut along the facade during construction. And now things are bad, there is a bank gloomy, like a dead hive, the industrious bees do not scurry about, they do not carry honey, and the windows are dirty about everything else. They say. It's clear: in this bank, you can smoke safes only for educational purposes, for the sake of workout. But Nastya does not need to break safes in it. She moves to the banking world required. Need to get in. Where the windows sparkle with a mirror reflection, you can't get in there.

Nastya figured out how much money she had left, she decided: that's enough. Turned around the corner, there - a giant store, the one in which the Dragon held an instant meeting. Everything in this store. There is. I bought a bucket, a rag, soap powder. I borrowed a ladder from the janitor, got some water into the bucket, climbed the stairs, washes the window. And outside the window - a meeting of the board of directors.

For those who have not yet been to the Balearic Islands, I inform you: they are rocky, the islands Balearic, and clay, and the Spanish sun in sadistic inclinations was convicted more than once, the sun burns everything to hell, and clay dust from any breeze closes the windows and walls with brown layer of dirt. Therefore, it is necessary to wash the windows regularly, and the walls do not interfere with washing or painting sometimes. Nastya wetted a rag in a bucket, a clean rag was full of warm soapy water, it was already flowing from it streams. She ran a rag through the mud and, like a great archaeologist, removed the geological layer from the window. A light beam broke into the dark kingdom, hit the director's table, squealed prosessed. A ray of sun blinded them, like a flash of RGD-33 grenades. They all jumped out at once street, and security with them:

- Hey, get down! Who is she?

They take Nastya to the office. Interrogation.

- Who sent you?

Why would someone send me here? Soon your bank will collapse, that's when the vultures flock. Who needs you now?

"Were you sent on a reconnaissance mission to rob our bank?"

"Is there anything to rob here, besides office tables?"

— What did you think?

- Perform a miracle.

And whispering behind her back:

- She?

- She is the best.

- What is your name?

- Nastya.

- In our opinion, Anastasia.

- Exactly.

- Listen. Anastasia, we are good people and your intention is fine, but if you wash our windows, then you simply have nothing to pay with. We are in crisis.

- It's clear. But why show the crisis to the whole world? Since you are in a crisis, it means that everything is sparkling must, therefore, each of the leaders of the bank must every day a fresh flower in his buttonhole insert and smile smugly and joyfully. The rules of camouflage, gentlemen, must be observed.

The directors exchanged glances among themselves: a clever girl is filling up with us to wash the windows.

- All right, Anastasia, my window, we will drop among ourselves, we will pay you a peseta.

"No, sir, I am not a cleaning lady. I want to perform a miracle, I don't take money for miracles.

"What miracle do you wish to perform, Anastasia?"

- Pull your bank out of the swamp.

The directors threw themselves off as much as they could, raked the last copper coins out of their pockets, the unemployed were whistled, those bank windows were washed to a sparkling, the dust from the walls was knocked down by the pressure of water, the marble steps were cleaned to whiteness, the bronze was dazzlingly polished to a shine. Nastya the director did not allow the window to be washed from the outside anymore: come here, inside, work a miracle here.

And what to create it? Just everything. Outside, let the unemployed work hard, the director is just out of For advertising reasons, it is not appropriate to wash the windows of your bank. And inside... Why not?

Come on, gentlemen of the director, take off your tailcoats, white shirt-fronts, let's put things in order inside. The floor should sparkle, the chandeliers should shine, and the bronze should glow in the dark. And there's nothing to be ashamed of it is necessary to work hard for a miracle and do not shun rough work. Would you know, gentlemen, who is senorita Anastasia for real! And after all, even she is not shy about waving a broom.

And in the glorious town of Palma, a new rumor is already walking: the bank "Balerika" has lured the senorita TS". They gave her a thousand pesetas. She performed a miracle: she bought a bucket and a rag and in ten minutes washed thirty huge windows and the entire facade ... People come running to the Balerika, they can't believe their eyes: in the morning it was still impossible to pass by, the smell of old urine even scared the dogs away. And now!

And all this in five minutes?

- For three.

Long after midnight, inside the bank, the directors completed their work. That's it! We, in the Soviet Union, it was called a communist subbotnik. We have Comrade Lenin himself, a log in the Kremlin wore. True, popular rumor says that it is inflatable. And nothing. What is unusual, gentlemen financial tycoons? Unusual. And somehow happy. A person loves, having completed difficult work, sit down (let it be on a chair, let it be on the floor), stick out your tongue like a tired dog, and admire your work.

There is something.

Closer to midnight, the directors' wives, alarmed, gather in the bank. They are surprised. Never they did not notice such diligence for their husbands. Inside the whole bank glitters-sparkles overflows. Someone brought a small keg of Spanish beer. "San Miguel". Saint Michael in

ours. No one wants to leave their job. Drink like a brother. Too bad there's nothing to eat.

It's time to disperse.

— Senorita Anastasia, where do you live?

- Nowhere.

- Like nowhere else?

Yes, nowhere. On the seaside. On the pebbles.

The directors consulted before leaving, they decided that it was all the same to steal in Balerika there is nothing, and the senorita does not look like those who steal stationery tables in Balerika.

- Senorita Anastasia, the general director has a rest room behind his office, there is a sofa leather. If you are not afraid in such a building at night ...

Nastya fell asleep, as she always fell asleep: with a rapid failure. And immediately thundered in front of her with a steel chain, a terrible dog-wolfhound, for some reason so similar to Sasha Dragon. And she, Nastya, fluffy white dog, biting him furiously, demanding love.

And he gave her love. Plenty and generous.

7

The broad masses of the people rushed to the Balerika in the morning. The most important thing in banking client's trust and hope for a miracle. No, the Spanish people do not invest money in Balerika, no the people have money, they don't pay salaries to the people for six months. But still people near the bank pushing. And he looks inside. She looks around with her eyes: where is she herself?

And she sleeps on the director's leather sofa behind a heavy, dust-beaten curtain yesterday, which covers it from the Spanish sun in a clean window. She hugs a pillow in her sleep and whispers incomprehensible words. Nobody worries her. And she sleeps off for many exhausting days magical studies, for nights on a stone beach, for difficult days of hopeless wanderings stuffy city.

She woke up in the evening and for a long time could not understand where this had brought her. Then she sat on sofa. She stretched and yawned sweetly. I remembered first fragments of dreams, then - yesterday. She noted that they did not manage to clean everything in the director's rest room: the basket remained full of unnecessary papers.

She pulled the urn towards her. In the urn are letters. Yesterday a whole ton of such letters were thrown out: "Dear señor! Three years ago, we had the honor of giving you a loan in the amount of... And isn't it about time, dear sir, return..." Previously, the bank sent these letters by carriages. Now stopped - no money for postage costs. Therefore, Balerika does not send letters to its unscrupulous clients.

Nastya smoothed out the crumpled paper. I read it again.

This is where it dawned on her.

CHAPTER 31

1

She knew: in Paris, the flower of the Russian Imperial Guard was going to Saint-Denis. IN "El Dorado".

It is believed that the name says a lot. Don't believe it. The title doesn't say much, but about everything. Good restaurants have modest names. The best ones are quite modest. "Yar", to example. But if it sounds beautiful, too beautiful - "Eldorado", "Gold Bottom", "Monte Carlo", "Los Angeles", then you don't have to go in, you can guess it like that: a dirty tavern, a brothel.

But where, if not in a dirty tavern, is the color of the former Russian imperial guard going to gather? Certainly not in Alexander.

She descended the worn stone steps under the sooty vaults.

- Hello.

They didn't answer her.

- I need Prince Ibragimov.

They threw cards on the table, and the terrible overgrown muzzles turned to her all at once. AND parted. Against the wall, behind a table cut with a knife, there is a hefty man in a tattered Circassian coat. Gas pockets on the chest. The pockets remained, and the silver gazys were soaked back in 1923.

"I hear you, ma'am.

— Hello, prince. I have a business.

He only slightly bowed his overgrown head with a curly beard to the very eyes and grinned, nodding in her direction.

- She's got a job!

And everyone grinned.

- I, the prince, - Anastasia Streletskaya. The silence in the basement rustled, deepening.

- Count Andrei Streltsy's daughter?

- Yes.

"And what would you like, madame?"

"I told you, I have a job.

He grunted, and behind him everyone in the basement seemed to exhale, stir, as if talking, words without speaking. Immediately, however, they fell silent.

- Case. Ha! What business can the daughter of the Red Count have? Count Streletsky went to service to the Soviets ... I hope the Reds shot him for this.

"He was shot," Nastya answered dully and distinctly.

— In! the bearded man concluded triumphantly, raising his index finger instructively and repeated: — Wow!

In an exclamation and a grand gesture, he put it all at once: didn't I warn him?' Could whether to be otherwise! Found someone to serve! But is it, gentlemen officers, that anything other than execution awaits you? in the homeland of the world proletariat?! There were some military men here, they were talking about the return!

For many years the bearded prince was tormented by secret jealousy. There were two ways: for the Reds or against. Everyone had a choice. Those who went for the Reds, rule Russia, nestled in the royal chambers, the Bolsheviks were given the rank of commanders and commanders. And those who are against are in Parisian coffee houses the last pants in the cards squander.

At night, scratching himself under a lousy blanket, the prince groaned: oh, he gave a blunder, he had to go red ... But waking up in the evening after a drunken night and a heavy, hot thirst crowded morning, only became angrier: I bastards, once!

The prince knew ... He knew and believed ... He knew that the communists would then cut all their fellow travelers, all who have gone to their service. And the bearded 1937 waited. He has since the Civil of the war, a list of friends was prepared on a tallow paper. Those who went to the red. Those who Ataman Siberian prince Ibragimov vowed to cut his throat at the first meeting. Not burned out prince. But it's all right that if the prince himself didn't have the chance to cut the throats of his former friends, then at least Comrade Stalin was found on them, took up this business, got carried away, shot whom he should.

Prince Ibragimov crossed out names in his list after each Moscow trial. AND less and less of them remained on the list, former friends. Finally, the only one left on the list was the count Andryushka Streletsky, with whom they once started together in the Life Guards Cuirassier Regiment, on During the German war, lice were fed in the trenches. Then fate brought together in Siberia. Already enemies. under the village Ferluev. The red commander of the Streltsy detachment of free shooters of Prince Ibragimov drove into snowy gorge, in a ravine, squeezed, locked the exits and shouts, chuckles: come out, they say, Mahmoud, give up, take out your gang, I won't touch it, out of old friendship I'll make it my deputy. A Mahmud Ibragimov went to a prominent place like a truce, so that the Reds could see him, patted between his legs and the red commander Streletsky before his inevitable death shouted curses, threatened heavenly punishment: Allah will not forgive the service of the shaitans, and your Christ will not forgive. You red fuckers shouted, you will kill us here, and then the communists will cut you all. Then the prophet woke up in Prince Ibragimov, and he shouted insulting words in red, but they did not shot. Come, yelled the prince, to me, Adryushka, we will break through to China, we will leave for Paris! ..

At night, Ataman Ibragimov rushed through the pass through the snow. Lost people. Main - horses. Where in Siberia without a horse! I abandoned all machine guns on the pass. The whole convoy.

Escaped like a fox from a trap. Brought out seven of the last four hundred. Gone. gold reserve abandoned ... Came to China in worn out boots. In them, the whole world went around: Harbin, Shanghai, Sydney,

Panama, Brazil, Algeria. Now here in Paris the ataman sips the crappy wine. Into the cards cut. Allah will forgive. Prince Ibragimov has no luck with cards. And generally no luck in this life. One consolation: the prophecy came true - those who went to serve the Reds, fate raised high, let it go low...

So Comrade Stalin let Andryushka Streletsky into the spray. Right.

The message about the execution of an old friend-enemy obviously liked the prince, and he graciously pointed out Nastya on a creaking chair.

- So what does the communist countess want from me, whose father went to the communists and killed his compatriots for the sake of social justice?

"Prince, we are not talking about my father now, but about the case that I offer you. Don't know what committed by my father, but I hope you do not suspect me that I personally took part in mass shootings...

Gentlemen officers neighed with a cavalry squadron. They neighed to wheezing and snoring.

"Madame, I assure you that no one personally suspects you of this.

"Then get down to business. I no longer live in Soviet Russia. I need money. I know where to get it. Help is needed. .

"Madame, I am only interested in big money.

"Me too, sir."

2

"Your Excellency, my plan is simple: a certain Señor Juan Cerveza took the money in Spanish Bank "Balerika TS" He put the money into circulation and made good money. Then the Civil War Spain, crisis, anarchy. The bank does not return the debt and does not intend to return. Senor Cerveza I am sure that the bank has been ruined by the war and will soon be declared bankrupt. Our job: to wrest from it everything he borrowed, take interest for four years, punish bad behavior and collect payment from him for our work with him.

"We have to find him first.

- I found it. He lives here in Paris. On Avenue Foch. Almost at the very arch. There's a house five-story. His apartment is the top three floors.

- We need to collect information about his habits, accomplices, friends, relatives, neighbors ...

- I collected.

- Next - capture?

- Capture.

"And... a persuasive conversation?"

And a persuasive conversation. I heard, prince, you were an ataman in Siberia ... I heard you

you know how to convince people.

"We know how," the prince stretched sweetly and rubbed his hands. "But you need a car to capture it. This costs money. We don't have money. And you, sir?

"I don't have any money either. Finally got to Paris. But I know where to get it.

- Share.

- You, prince, if I am not mistaken, were awarded officer George and Stanislav with swords. You, Alexander Mikhailovich, with Vladimir on the neck and Anna on the weapon. you, Sergey Nikolaevich...

— Lay orders?! How dare you...

Monstrous fury suddenly exploded bearded. He grabbed the green bottle by the neck, and seemed to crush it with short, powerful fingers.

Nastya smiled contemptuously. She, too, exploded into rage, but she restrained herself. She wanted shout in his face: "Oh, gentlemen, proud officers of the guards, your women are selling themselves on streets of cities all over the world, from Sydney to Paris and Rio, and with their miserable pennies they support you, loafers, and here you are playing in honor of an officer!

But Nastya did not say this, she only scraped her nails on the table like an angry cat. And turned away to disgust.

Nastya did not say offensive words. But they understood what she wanted to tell them.

The prince threw away the bottle. The bottle slammed on the brick floor, green wine splashed together with sonorous fragments of the same green glass. Nastya would have been frightened by a sharp gesture, ringing and the roar of the unexpected. But her anger didn't let her get scared. Warped her with anger: look, there are zealots of honor! Therefore, she had no emotions left to frighten. That's why she didn't even flinch when everyone shuddered.

They understood it in their own way.

The prince put his hand somewhere deep into his bosom, took out a greasy handkerchief, a tight knot tied. He broke the knot with his teeth. He threw on the table George, sparkling with whiteness, and Stanislav with swords and eagles. The ribbons are greasy, and the gold rings and glows.

He left and left without looking at anyone.

3

Capturing is easy. Especially if the client is hanging around the girls. If dark curves the lanes draw him in.

They took him right there, on Saint-Denis. The street is wide, and to the sides - alleys, and from the alleys - long dark corridors-transitions are also like alleys, only covered, filthy with cats and people. There stairs creaking up and down, buckets and garbage cans, lanterns torn out there,

darkness, stench and dampness, where the greasy walls are covered with obscene resolute appeals...

A man with that kind of money could take pictures of girls on Pitaly and even on Madeleine, there are girls and better quality, and cleaner.

But more expensive. And he was used to Saint-Denis ... All his life here. Having become rich, the habits of youth are not changed.

Señor Juan Cerveza was brought wrapped in a piece of roofing iron. Like a surprise in packaging. His suit is new, expensive, but stained with dust and rust. Shoes varnished, also covered in dust. Or rather, only one shoe remained. On the left leg. And the shoe on the right I lost my legs somewhere while being dragged. It's annoying. Evidence. On the other hand, this is a precious grain experience: next time, before wrapping a person in roofing iron, it will be necessary Take off your shoes if they are slippery.

And the seigneur holds a piece of his cane in his mouth. Like a faithful dog who takes a stick from the pond to the owner drags. This one, too, took a bite, crashed into a tree with his teeth. Both ends of the cane with a telephone cable intercepted, tied with a tight knot on his neck. So as not to drop by chance.

Of the visible bruises, there is only one on him so far, under the left eye. One, but vigorous.

They threw him on the brick floor, rumbled with an iron sheet, turning him around.

It so happened that in the whole basement there was only one object on which you can sit - empty barrel.

Nastya, as the only representative of the fair sex here, was seated on that barrel. AND it turned out - she sits alone. The rest are standing. Except for the one at her feet.

And it also happened that in the whole company in Spanish, Nastya is the only one who speaks freely. Of course, except for the one at her feet.

This circumstance brought her to the fore. She says the others are silent. She speaks quietly and clearly. And to hear her words, everyone was quiet. Not everyone understands her words. verbatim, but their meaning is clear to everyone:

- Señor, I immediately open the cards: you won't get out of here alive. You will be taken out. Sveta you will not see the daytime either: they will carry you out at night in an iron roll. You know why: you debtor of Balerika bank. You do not pay debts and do not intend to pay. This is not good. For this I love you I will punish. My punishment is death. But I'm ready to help you if you help me. I need get the money you owe; besides, I work with you and you owe me my job pay. Stealing you, dragging you away, hiding you - all this costs money. You cost me your capture you will reimburse. By stealing you, I and my associates are risking their heads in the most direct sense. You know that France is a barbarian country. Here they publicly cut off heads for the things that you you force me to do it. I'm risking my head. And these gentlemen risk their violent heads. Therefore, you must pay our risk in full. I don't know about gentlemen officers, but I appreciate my head

expensive. Have no illusions - I know more about you than you think, I know how much you have money and where they are. I need to get them, but so that neither the bank, nor the police, nor your companions didn't bother picking them up. Think how to do it. Think. Think of it - I promise an easy death. I can keep my word. Well, if something happens to me, a terrible death awaits you. Do not believe? Do you want me to show you my skills?

4

A mannequin with a peeling nose is tied to a chair. In the mannequin's pants - an RGD-33 grenade. TO ring - rope. First try. Result: it won't work. As the Spaniards say: no pasaran. IN translated into thieves: not prokhonzhyo. It will not work because you pull the rope around the corner, but not you pull out the ring with the safety pin, and you pull the whole mannequin with a chair from its place. What do?

"Come on, gentlemen officers, let's cover the legs of the chair with stones!"

Overlaid. We tried again. Result: if you pull the rope, you pull it out safety pin ring. And the chair with the mannequin will remain in place. That is exactly what is required. Prince Ibragimov looked out of the basement: no one? Nobody. Then back to the basement. Everyone around the corner! Everyone shut your ears! And señor Chervez, the prince, with a knife gently in the barrel: pull, señor, the rope.

It rumbled around the corner. It banged so that centuries-old dirt fell from the ceilings of the basement. thought and stones will fall, it passed. Strongly in the sixteenth century in French estates vaults basements connected. Dust and dirt dissipated, peeked around the corner - great! No chair or a mannequin with a peeling nose - only pieces on the floor and tatters, like Moscow snowflakes, fall off. circling.

Then the second chair here! Experience is a great thing: immediately the legs of the chair were overlaid with stones. For unshakable stability. Now, Senor Juan Cerveza, it's your turn. Sit down. instead of a mannequin. We will pull you with wires. In your pants you have the same grenade. RGD-33. Hope you only tear off the eggs? Hope. And the gentlemen of the guards officers hope that not only will you vomit eggs explosion. Will smash it like a mannequin was smashed. Are you sitting tight? This is good. Grenade with ropes to the belly your tie is inconvenient. Better with a bandage. They said: return the debt. They spoke well. Not understand well. It's a pity. We feel bad. You feel bad. Because of some stinky money your life you give it back, and gentlemen officers and their charming leader risk their lives, necks, consider placed under the guillotine. With great pleasure I would let you go, but you can't - you're in you run to complain to the police. Therefore, you must be eliminated by all means. So eliminate there was nothing to recognize.

So ... Squeeze the metal antennae so that the safety pin easily comes out after ringlet, releasing the safety lever ... The rope is tied. All around the corner...

Did Señor Juan Cerveza understand what the skinned prince was muttering? Obviously understood. Even Not knowing the Russian language, I still understood. He was deaf from the explosion of the first grenade: all ears with his hands they squeezed him, and he pulled on the rope, because there was nothing to clamp his ears with, because he was stunned and hard of hearing. But still understands. What is there to understand? I didn't pay back the debt - well, get the RGD-33 in your pants. Get it Expensive. Deserved. Checked by these Russian barbarians on a mannequin: everything works, now it's your turn... So that even after you the pieces of pants under the ceiling would fly like downy feathers...

Last wish. What do you want in the end, Senor Cerveza? Smoke a cigarette? We won't give you a kiss, we're running out of time, it's time to leave before you get caught, and take a drag once - Please. Do you still want a drink? Also not forgotten - on, take a sip. Why are you turning your face? Russian vodka not to your liking?

Now goodbye, señor.

All around the corner! Shut your ears! The prince pulled the rope. The ring tightened and reached for rope. And behind the ring - a check. A check is such a steel wire, folded in half and in hole inserted. On the fold of that wire there is a ring, and on the other side there are steel tails in different sides are separated. The prince brought them together, now from around the corner the rope is pulling, the rope pulls the ring, and the ring pulls this very wire-check. Passing the hole, steel tails of her slightly pressed together.

The senor howled.

5

Didn't take into account the little things. In general, everything was foreseen. In the protected forest Compiègne found the abandoned estate. Examined. The area has been combed. Posts posted. Decided: a grenade explosion deep in the dungeon will not be heard from outside. And if it is heard, then the sound will be deaf and incomprehensible to an outsider's ear. We examined the vaults of the basement: will they collapse? They expressed hope: they will survive. Stocked customer's steel wire knit and strong thin ropes - pull out rings from grenades. The mannequin came out easily. In Paris mannequins more than natural people.

Parisian mannequins are constantly updated. Faster than generations of real people. Because in the Paris dumps of decommissioned mannequins - mountains are whole, male mannequins with naked interspersed with female mannequins. Stacked. One layer on top of another. Around the city Mannequins of Paris are like man-made mountains, like heaps of slag in the Donetsk steppe.

Grenades are no problem either. The Spanish Civil War is here. Just faded away. Behind next door. And after the war, and even the civil one, of course, an excess of weapons walks around doorways of all neighboring states: would you like cartridges for the German machine gun MG-34 and engine from the Russian I-16 fighter? Where to put weapons now if the war is civil

completed? The war ended with the complete defeat of the communists. Comrade Stalin's attempt to ignite Europe from Spain failed at the start of that glorious 1939. Contrary to the slogan Communists no pasaran - they say, they will not pass, they will not pass, - they passed. Anyone who even thinks a little, he must understand: in the same 1939, Comrade Stalin will try to set fire to Europe from the other side. But few people in this world understand ... There is no time to think. business to do need to: do you take ammo? No, we have ammo. We need grenades. This is good enough. any type, any country, in any quantity. We settled on the Soviet RGD-33. She doesn't look very good elegant, but works well, and it is known from experience: it tears off not only eggs.

So everything was foreseen, everything was prepared. They forgot only the señor's spare pants seize.

As soon as the rope was pulled tight, she dragged the ring behind her and tore out the pin, the seigneur howled, roared. With bound legs he pulls and twists, he breaks out with his bound hands, all of the ropes rushes like a swan into the clouds, screams from it with a screech and a stink. But it's too late: the ring with the check is torn out, the safety lever flew off to the side under the action of the mainspring, and the drummer under by the action of the same mainspring, which nothing holds back, he pulled into the primer igniter. Now the slowdown is four and a half seconds before the explosion. Sometimes a little more slowdown - it depends on the accuracy of production, on the dosage of the flammable composition. For señora, the deceleration before the explosion dragged on for thirty seconds. In those seconds, he yelled so that damaged his auditory nerves, his eyes were filled with blood, because the blood vessels from screaming in some places burst. The muzzle is burgundy, like a sunset over the ocean.

A hefty Russian with a beard to the very eyes comes out from around the corner:

- Stop yelling. The first chin-chinar grenade exploded. And in the second grenade we are a primer the detonator was not inserted. Don't scream, it won't explode. This was your test. For endurance. Weak you, señor, containment centers

6

He who deceives others, who lives by deceit, will never be happy. This rule is such. Cunning and deceit will surely come out sideways. And the one who deceives others is always a coward. AND no need to torture him. He needs to be scared, and he will agree. But the gentlemen did not think officers, and Nastya did not think that Señor Juan Cerveza could be frightened to such an extent.

Now Señor Cerveza is broken. He is ready to sign any papers and give everything. But everything is not necessary. You just need to get a debt from him. In addition, you need to get paid for working with him and interest accrued during non-payment...

Here is the problem.

The problem is that the money is big, because no bank can part with that money.

want.

If the seigneur writes a check addressed to Mademoiselle Streletskaya, then the director of the bank to the police will ring and ask questions in the presence of the police. The simplest question is: why is a rich person Señor Cerveza pays some ragamuffin a lot of money? For what such merits? Also a bank may require confirmation of the correctness of the check. Another problem. The señor has a blue face. Impression: they beat him for three days. And no one beat him. It was just from screaming that the vessels burst on the muzzle. Wait until it heals? But the señor is now generally some kind of crippled. And forever like this will remain. The policeman will only glance at him with one eye and realize that the matter is unclear ...

Maybe organize a joint company with him? Señor Juan Cerveza contributes capital and gives written permission to the partners to dispose of these capitals. Good idea. But then partners' names will be registered somewhere. What is it for? Yes, and give permission he must use the capital personally, in the presence of a notary ...

I understand that a huge experience has now been accumulated in transferring money from the debtor's account interested structures. I understand that anyone who works in a noble business forcing out debts, will tell me a hundred methods, one is better than the other, but the fact of the matter is that I no need to suggest. Someone would have told our Nastenka. She has no experience, and suggest no one. And you can get into trouble up to your ears: just enter the bank, just open the bank there are a hundred papers in front of you... When you have no idea in which corner you need to sign... Eh, capitalism! Damn you. And you can't let the seigneur go to the bank. Until he has a face will heal... Yes, and he will burst into tears in the bank, what then? And gentlemen officers Nastya do not suggest solutions can. They fought with the Reds in the taiga. They have their own experience.

Sleeping Nastya. Under the very roof of the gentlemen, the officers vacated a closet. Asleep, in a dream decision looking for. Nastya dreams of Messer. Strict and dry. Good for Messer: I went to the bank, give me three suitcases money! It is a pity that Nastya is not a sorceress, but only a sorcerer's apprentice. Besides, she is a student. tamer of sorcerers, their master. But she is a beginner.

She opened her eyes. Paris at night rustles below. Nastya looks at the wall, purple window adorned with light. What to do? She turns over and falls asleep again. She doesn't dreaming today of a big white fluffy dog. She dreams of wolves. The wolves chase her through the forest. At the main wolf is a human head. This is Comrade Stalin himself. And then Stalin's waiting room. And the wolves don't run anymore. She sits and waits for a call. Stalin's secretary Comrade Poskrebyshev collected Stalinist drawings... Now, if Nastya had Stalinist drawings... Wolves and devils... She would sold at auction ... Stalin in painting, frankly, is not Picasso, but they would give money for Stalinist drawings... And if she had a Picasso painting...

Here it is! The dream bounced off like the safety lever of an RGD-33 grenade under the action of a combat springs. Nastya was already thrown up on an old creaky bed: there is a solution! What exactly is she

worse than Picasso? Squeaky ladder down, down, down. From under the very tiled roof - to the basement stone. Dawn only slightly adorned the Parisian sky with a green sunrise, because gentlemen the officers had not gone to bed yet.

- I know what to do!

- Report, ma'am.

"We will sell a work of art to Señor Juan Cerveza. We sell publicly.

We will sell at auction. In front of all of Paris.

- Well thought out.

Do you understand? We sold, he bought. No crime. After that we show the check at the bank: give us our money!

Should he be present at the auction?

"That's the point: you shouldn't. Wealthy people buy masterpieces through nominees.

- What about the price?

- We will put our people in the hall, they will inflate the price to the exact amount that we should be torn off the seigneur.

- Everything would be fine. Delay for the smallest detail: where do we get that masterpiece that can be sell for millions of francs?

At this, Nastya smiled with such happiness, as if the northern lights blazed in her eyes:

- There will be no business behind a masterpiece. I will create a masterpiece.

CHAPTER 32

1

Yezhov's apartment is empty. Nikolai Ivanovich wanders through the echoing halls, corridors and rooms between naked stone aunts with their arms torn off. He took the bottle in his hand. His face was distorted:

Previously, the Zarya factory supplied bottles on a personal order, with personal labels:

"For Comrade Yezhov." So it was wound up: "For Comrade Kirov", "For Comrade Zinoviev",

"For Comrade Bukharin". With wax seals, bottles were brought to the leaders, on each - a number,

as on a weapon, each form is attached with a dozen signatures.

And now Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov has come to the point that the bottles in his house are without numbers, without forms, without personal labels. So after all, they can poison! Yezhov twisted the bottle in his hands, expressed bewilderment with his face and, suddenly angry, threw that bottle, like an RGD-33 grenade, through almost the entire museum hall. The bottle crashed against someone's picturesque stone ass, with fragments striking glass paintings of some Renoirs unknown to Yezhov.

Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov never learned to call stone aunts statues. Is there a word good, understandable to everyone - a figure. That's what he calls them.

Among the figures is a passage. Yezhov unlocked the secret door with a special key.

Steps down. He pressed the button, the basement lit up. Nikolai Ivanovich has a hiding place here. About him No one knows. Nikolasha does not let anyone into his private life. Removed Yezhov from leadership NKVD, removed from the management of camps, prisons, firing points, torture chambers. But it is not so easy to remove him from his beloved profession. He has his own, private torture chamber.

Okay here. Cosy. The tool is top notch. Ordered in Germany. Such a tool not in Lefortovo, nor in Sukhanov. Only Nikolai Ivanovich has such a tool in his personal use, private property. He touched the sparkling, nickel-plated nail files with his hand: oh, Germans! What a culture of torture!

Where are we before them, gray-footed.

2

Stalin squeezed Yezhov's hand. Embraced by the shoulders:

Nikolay, you have a brilliant head! We are still working with you.

For a long time Stalin did not shake his hand! For a long time Stalin did not hug him by the shoulders and did not call him by name. For a long time the Stalinist smile did not sparkle with such friendship.

Yezhov's legs became light, light, some force caught him, and he almost skipped jumped out of the Stalinist office. Nikolai Yezhov remembers this feeling: earlier, when he was

People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, came to Stalin with long execution lists, Stalin signed, and uncontrollable joy seized Kolya Yezhov, and on her wings he jumped out of Stalin's cabinet...

It was this feeling that carried him out into the corridor ... It was then that they took him.

3

They took him somehow quietly and casually. Right outside the door of Stalin's office hung over him Holovanov's shadow:

- You're under arrest!

Two grabbed them under the arms, turned them back like flippers, and pulled them up. From blue buttonholes of state security, someone with an impudent muzzle tore off huge marshal stars ...

- Go bitch!

4

The second thing in Berlin prisons is sanitization. And the first thing is to hit.

In those glorious times, the same procedure was adopted in our country. And Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov didn't beat. He was led into a large, apparently basement room under heavy brick vaults. It looks like a monastery.

In the middle of the room is a wooden chair bolted to the floor, with straps. He was seated, pressed head to the back and fastened the throat with a wide belt. They immediately fastened their legs to the legs of the chair, and hands to the wide armrests polished by their predecessors. And they all went out, she alone in leaving the twilight.

The wide hall is almost empty: an armchair with Yezhov fastened in the middle, and in front of him, on elevation, a table, as if for the presidium. Or for the tribunal. Only in the tribunal there are three chairs and a portrait of Lenin on the wall, and here there is only one chair. And there is no Comrade Lenin.

Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov shrank inwardly, prepared for resistance. But there's no one around, and steps are not heard. Quiet. Not a sound. And I saw Nikolai Yezhov on the table...

On the table in front of him Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov saw a complete set of torture chambers. tools. Made in Germany. Stolen from his secret torture chamber by someone.

Who dared to climb into his hiding place?! Who dared to raise his hand to the most sacred, to the private own?!

And a terrible thought struck the brain: after all, he, Kolenka, the favorite of everything progressive humanity, can also be tortured.

A wild thought, from such a thought - a wild cry.

And then laughter: what nonsense! Who dares to torture him? He is Yezhov! He is Nicholas

Ivanovich! Nobody dares to touch him...

I tried to move my right hand...

No, those who nailed him with belts know a lot about torture. Psychological torture is stronger physical. He felt himself all the way to the tips of his toenails. He realized in all depth your complete helplessness. Fastened so that he can only drive with his eyes. Right. AND to the left. If a fly lands on his face, he won't be able to defend himself...

If he had been tormented, if he had been tortured... It is not known what is better: torture or its expectation. But him left alone in an obviously torture cellar. He doesn't know how long he'll be waiting. There is no daytime light, there are no noises and rustles. They should have come by now!

But they don't go. How long does he sit like that? Hour? Two? Or twenty minutes only?

He closed his eyes and squealed, urging the executioners not to delay or delay.

- Don't yell. What pissed off?

Directly from behind Yezhov came a large, puffy, calm woman with a magnificent next to gold teeth. She sat down at the table.

- Yezhov?

- Yezhov.

- Let's write it down like this: E-jo-ov. And I'm Ivanova. Investigator Ivanova. Not your investigator. Not from the NKVD.

I'm from Sasha Holovanov. Do you know Sasha? What a man! Investigator Ivanova screwed up her eyes.

She smiled. I remembered something. - OK. Me to you, Kolya, has long been assigned an unspoken investigation to lead, but for a long time you did not notice me. Now pay attention to me. You, Kolya, are brilliant head. Now we will work with you.

With a strong hand, Ivanova touched the sparkling nail files, the tweezers, burning with a cold sheen.

Her sensual nostrils touched with a slight tremor. Like a thoroughbred mare before a record check-in:

- What a tool! This is not the case either in Lefortovo or in Sukhanov. Here is the quality! Europe! And we, Kolya, do you know what kind of antediluvian work was done? Germans, damn them, what a culture of torture! Where are we before them, gray-footed!

- Comrade Ivanova, I'll tell you everything. What do you want?

- Zolotishko, Kolya, are you hiding?

- I'm hiding.

- Pebbles?

- And pebbles.

- And the currency in Swiss accounts?

- I'll tell you everything.

- And he collected compromising evidence on leading comrades ...

- Yes.

- Do you have material?

- Eat. Who needs it?

— Oh, Kolya, it's boring to work with you. You at least rest on something, otherwise I have no reason apply special investigative method No. 12. But don't worry, I'll come up with a reason. I need compromising information on Beria. On Zavenyagin. On Serebriansky. On Holovanov.

Yezhov Nikolai Ivanovich confirms, blinking his eyes: there is one for everyone.

5

A rumor slipped out of some gateway and went for a walk around Moscow. Rumor about a conspiracy in the NKVD. The conspirators gathered at Lake Baikal. There were seven of them. They conspired to kill Comrade Stalin. A Comrade Stalin, don't be a fool, he sent his friend there, Messer the conjurer. Messer He pretended to be invisible, sat next to the conspirators, drank vodka. They were all surprised that the bottle empty quickly. Messer had a bite, shook his mustache. And how the main conspirator hinted that comrade It would be nice to kill Stalin, so Messer just looked at him, and his head burst.

Then he looked at the others, and their heads burst. How did Messer kill them? Eh, grayness, so look the same!

And another rumor in Moscow: Messer wanders between us invisibly. If anyone wants a friend Kill Stalin, his head will burst.

Stalin looked sideways at his new People's Commissar of Internal Affairs General Commissar State Security Beria Lavrenty Pavlovich:

"Listen, Lavrenty, what rumors are circulating in Moscow. People say that you have a conspiracy in the NKVD. They say that some scoundrels gathered on Lake Khasan and agreed to kill me. They say they have all heads burst. You, Lavrenty, figure it out and report to me who in the NKVD had his head burst and Why. It may be that someone escaped from there whole. We need to find everyone who has a head burst.

CHAPTER 33

1

It's nasty in Paris at dawn. It rained during the night. It is not raining now. The cold of the street dried up. It's disgusting. It's disgusting not only because it's cold, but mainly because there is no money. No money in Paris is one disorder. Whatever you look at, everything angers. And the French are also not sweet. Without money. Wipers sweep the sidewalks. Cursing. French. Pieces of iron rumble, windows of vegetable shops and bakeries open like drunken eyes, not at will, but out of bitter need. scavengers businesslike, like ants, scurrying through the streets, yesterday's dirt of the great city to their carts dragging.

Get ahead of the scavengers! Sleep, gentlemen officers, it was necessary at night. And now, my dears, work hard! Come on, run like gray wolves through the streets of Paris and get everything you need. A you need this: a gilded frame, canvas, paints and brushes. Hurry up - the auction opens at nine, we still need to get there, we need to agree with the organizers so that the masterpiece is put up for sale already today. And besides everything, a masterpiece also needs to be written ...

Yesaul of the Life Guards of the Cossack regiment Klim Lavrentiev dragged the frame. If in Parisian run through the streets in the morning, you will surely find at the garbage cans everything that your soul desires, everything that required. What's good - the frame is large. Luxurious. Broken, but a little. But is it nothing? Is this better than none? Right? Of course, right. She's a little broken. Only in two places. And the corners are broken. All four. The frame is not a carving on a noble tree, but a fake alabaster. For many years, she was taken for real. Until the corners are broken. Now in the corners of the dust white from under the worn blackened gilding. And thousands of generations of flies thickly gilded frame pissed off with thick dots.

Nastya sighed. She sighed lightly so as not to offend Yesaul Lavrentiev with a sigh. Every knows: the frame is the most important thing in painting. It's like a book cover: if the book is shiny and iridescent, if the picture is enticing on the cover, everyone will buy it. And gray with red little book, plain ... Who needs such a thing? Nastya already saw a shining frame ... Okay. Let it be will.

Where is the canvas? Here is the canvas. Captain of the Life Guards Horse Grenadier Regiment Volodya Sinelnikov in Montmartre, the artist stole. There are many of them. artists, at the Sacré-Coeur. Canvases in the morning unfold, yawn, swear with a hangover, just like the Parisian janitors. But due give, they even swear somehow elegantly and politely: would you deign, monsieur, to go to such and such a mother. Without much malice, they swear in the morning. Yawning. You can't, gentlemen. artists, allow protracted yawns, for the gallant captain will instantly snatch the canvas.

Where are the paints? And the brushes?

We managed to get a lot of paints. The only problem is with the color scheme. Only two colors. Black and red. Black paint - half a ten-liter can. The french uncle got dirty on paint the drainpipe ladder. Turned down, and the paint is gone. Was. Just been... Ah red paint was taken right around the corner. The fire brigade is there. There, around the corner, all the time fire trucks tint, shine renew. It was there that a passer-by picked up bucket, and he went calmly, without shying away, furtively without looking back. And in a bucket and a brush turned out. Isn't a whole bucket enough to create a masterpiece? Enough.

Nastya's closet immediately overflowed with the joyful smell of a major overhaul. What else, apart from talent and inspiration, is it required to create a masterpiece? It still takes time.

- Thirty seconds?

- There are thirty. And no more. The car is waiting, the engine is running, it is spending gasoline, and we have a new there is no money to send.

- And I'm already ready. You wear. Carefully. The paint is not dry, do not smudge.

2

It is not so easy to put a masterpiece up for auction. Long uncle with a hammer mouth He squeezed his palm, and laughter broke through his palm with an indecent toilet sound: prr-u-u-u.

— Go, beauty, you know where to go with such a masterpiece...

- Yes, this is the Russian super avant-garde!

And in response to her - the same indecent sounds of laughter clamped by the palms. Only in plural. In the utility room, where masterpieces are kept before being taken out to the hall, servants and guards run to the Russian miracle. Everyone chokes on laughter. Each friend calls.

- Monsieur is long, why not put it out for fun? Let the Parisian crowd too have some fun. You're advertising. Why not entertain the audience with a joke at the end? AND journalists.

"No, mademoiselle, go ahead with your jokes. We are in a serious position. We have the most the rich people of the world buy Raphael's canvases.

And then Nastya decided.

In every business, in every undertaking, there must be a reserve. In war - a reserve of shells. On round-the-world ship - a reserve of drinking water. The banker has a reserve of money hidden somewhere be. Is there a little...

Nastya pawned all orders. And she saved the princely George. Reserve. Agreed.

"Okay," he says to the long one. "If you don't sell my painting for a good price, you will take yourself.

And gives a golden cross. The long steward knew the value of the officer George. figured out
On the hand. Heavy. Good gold. The main thing is that the white enamel on the rays of the cross is not damaged.
was. And it shines, sparkles, like this morning this cross came out of Faberge's workshop. By
in the middle in a red circle should be George, the serpent smashing. Only there is no George. Instead of him
- two-headed black eagle. On the golden field This George is not for Christians, but for non-Christians - so
say George without George. George with an eagle. He knows the long price of officer George. Knows
the price of George for the Gentiles. A rare thing. Ten times more expensive than usual. tossed on
palms. Caught. And George disappeared in his palm, as in the palm of a magician. The long one chuckled.
- All right, let's entertain the audience. Let's expose your daub.

3

The hall is full. Elegant men. Women in hats. Silks. Furs. Funny fox faces
with amber eyes on the luxurious shoulders of radiant ladies.

— Miniature carriage, gold, sapphires, rubies and diamonds. Faberge. 1909 Present
heir to the throne, Tsarevich Alexei...

- One hundred thousand!

- One hundred and ten!

- One hundred and twenty!

The aroma of expensive perfume intoxicates. Through the lush crowd, businessmen slither like creeping snakes
crooks. They wink.

— A golden snuffbox. The total weight of the diamonds is three and six tenths of a carat. Faberge. 1906.
Belonged to the Grand Duke...

- Seventy thousand!

- Eighty!

The steward silently floats down the aisle. Gloves are white, silk. In a silver bucket
precious bottle. Happy buyer - from the management with best wishes.

— Shishkin. "Oak Grove".

On the balcony - onlookers. On the balcony - the former. Former Russian aristocrats. Former landowners.
Former leaders of the nobility. A month ago I sold one Shishkin for a thousand francs. Today
someone resells the same Shishkin for one hundred and eighty thousand.

- Order of St. Andrew the First-Called. Last quarter of the eighteenth century. The work of the unknown
masters. Presumably Osipov. The total weight of the diamonds...

There are silent guards at the door. At the treasure vault, too.

- Repin! .. Makovsky! .. Serov! ..

- Forty-five thousand - one ... Forty-five thousand - two ...

The hammer is knocking. An attendant in white gloves with a bow presents a picture to an elegant to Mr. Aivazovsky. Elegant considers two moments in a monocle. Nods. Servant with bows out. Another nod. An elderly lady wants to evaluate the painting for the last time.

— Please, madam.

Prices are skyrocketing, the hammer is banging.

- Russian super avant-garde. Painting by Anastasia Streletskaya "Second World War"...

The picture, curtained with blue silk, is taken out of storage and placed on a dais.

Conversations fade.

Silence. Two ministers, as if not in agreement, according to some sign known to them alone pulled off the silk. And the hall froze.

Paris has never seen anything like it.

On a gray canvas - two red stripes. One above the other. And across, crossing them, two black.

The hall went crazy, went crazy. This have not happened before.

And suddenly blew up the respectable public. Suddenly they stomped, whistled. Suddenly they neighed they screamed, they screamed. Oh, how smart and resourceful the French people are! Under the very curtain the owners of the auction decided to amuse the guests with a joke. The joke worked. Dear audience slides out of chairs. Laughter is contagious. Laughter induction sometimes strikes everyone at once. This and It happened. People collapse under soft plush chairs, tears of laughter stifle, laughter - to hiccups, to nervous shudder. Laughter can be deadly. Laughter can lead to death. Is it dangerous! You can choke on laughter like the water of Niagara Falls. And in this situation the ministers in white gloves should carry water with ice, which alone can calm those who laugh.

But ministers cannot save the most respectable audience from laughter - they themselves roll on the floor.

And exclaimed elegant:

“I won’t give a franc for such a picture, and ten sous is the price for it!”

“Honestly,” the tall man with the hammer objected, breaking out of his oppressive laughter, “ten sou you have to pay for the frame and thirty for the canvas, if you pay ten sous for a picture, then you get half a franc.

And again a wave of laughter came over, the people squeezed, depriving everyone of their voices.

So, the price has been offered. Madame, mademoiselle, monsieur! Half a franc - one ... Half a franc - two ...

- I give you a franc! I'll hang this picture in my closet!

In response - laughter to hiccups.

— Two francs! I will ask my guests what is wrong in this picture. I'll just hang her upside down and let someone guess!

Three francs!

- Four!

- Five francs!

Laughter subsides. They laughed. The same joke repeated ten times is not funny.

- Seven!

- Eight.

When ten francs were shouted from the back row for the sake of jokes, it was no longer funny at all.

It sounded indecent. That's why they didn't laugh anymore. But the price is named, and long with a hammer must bring the performance to the end - these are the rules of the auction:

"So, Madame, Mademoiselle, Monsieur, the price offered is ten francs. Price unheard of our auction. But what. Ten francs - one...

And then a hand went up in the far right corner.

I didn't understand the long one with a hammer:

- Do you want to say something?

"I don't want to say anything. I just want to buy this painting.

"Are you willing to pay more than ten francs for this scribble?"

"I am willing to pay more than ten francs for this masterpiece.

- Fine. Please. Eleven francs!

Immediately a hand went up in the other corner.

- Twelve!

But the first hand did not fall.

- Thirteen! Fourteen! Fifteen!

Both gentlemen did not give up. And then the long one with the hammer announced:

"Twenty francs!"

Such a high price did not bother both.

"Twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty!"

There were whispers in the hall.

- Fifty! Sixty francs!

Someone in the silence coughed nervously.

- Eighty five! Ninety!

When the long one announced one hundred, the hall froze. But the bargaining continues:

— One hundred and ten francs! One hundred and twenty! One hundred and thirty!

Stenographers in such cases would record movement in the hall.

- Two hundred! Two hundred twenty! Two hundred and forty!

There is such a situation: everyone around makes happiness and money out of nothing, and you, the fool, it is not clear how this is done. And then the excitement rises to the heart. The hall got excited. Mister in

right corner - clearly Russian. You can see it in the sea. And in the left corner - also Russian. The price has already passed five hundred francs, and they are not inferior to each other.

- Seven hundred fifty! Eight hundred!

But Russians understand art. Is not it?

— A thousand francs! One thousand one hundred!

The gentleman on the right has frayed cuffs. The gentleman on the left has a dirty, greasy tie.

Everything is clear: some rich people set up figureheads so as not to attract

excessive attention to the masterpiece that you want to buy, so as not to inflate the price.

- Three thousand! Three thousand three hundred!

The fight continues.

- Five! Five five hundred!

An expert with a magnifying glass jumped out to the dais, looked through the strokes and nodded affirmatively to someone to the audience: there is no doubt, this is really her brush. Without a doubt, this is the work of the same Streletskaia.

- Ten thousand! Eleven! Twelve!

Whispers in the hall:

"Have you heard about this, how is it ... Streletskaia?"

- Well, how! Don't you know anything about her?

"Twenty thousand francs!"

Hands at both ends do not fall, and then a long one with a hammer for the sake of brevity went with a step ten thousand:

- Fifty! Sixty! Seventy!

He reached a large and very round figure, gave himself a break and again, choking:

- One hundred thousand! One hundred and ten! One hundred and twenty.

The tension is growing. How not to grow? Everyone in the hall thinks: maybe join the fight, before it's too late, yes a masterpiece and intercept. Here and there, hands are raised, demonstrating desire pay more. But the fight is still mostly between two ragged Russians stubborn. Or maybe they just dressed up like that. Now one of them will grab luck by the wings, someone will acquire a masterpiece now. Now the fight will stop. One must give way, higher price nowhere to lift. It's still not Goya. And not Picasso.

- Five hundred thousand!

At these words, breaking the silence with their heels, a police outfit entered the hall. Masterpieces the auction is guarded by the organizers, but the authorities of the glorious city of Paris, having somehow found out about taking place, additional security measures have been taken.

And prices are rising.

"Nine hundred ninety thousand!"

Two stone-faced policemen stood on either side of the treasure being sold.

The rest are in the corner by the emergency exit, ready to beat off the attempt of intruders, whoever they are. nor were, to steal a masterpiece.

The long one with the hammer choked. Uncertainly said:

— A million francs. - Hesitantly looked around the corners of the shocked hall and repeated, as if begging for forgiveness: — Million.

I looked back long again and went to collect the price higher and higher. And in the glorious city Paris is already flying, fluttering sensation. And already the detachments of the mounted police are fighting off journalistic packs from the marble entrance.

- One million hundred thousand! One million two hundred!

It took a long time to climb to the first million. Until the second quickly - the account went through a hundred thousand: one million seven hundred, one million eight hundred, one million nine hundred, two.

— Two two hundred! Two four hundred!

Ten percent of the price - to the owners of the auction. From three million to three hundred thousand.

Three million five hundred! Four!

Shout from the hall:

- Water! Rather water! Lady bad!

The lady was dragged away on a stretcher very soon. Knees up. The muzzle of a silver fox is down. There is a reason for this speed: the attendants are eager to throw the lady out of the hall, rather return and watch the final.

"Eleven million francs!" Twelve! Thirteen!

The silence in the hall is such that if the long one whispered, it would still be in all corners heard. But he screams. He screams like a donkey, excited by the possibility of an act of love. He screams and his words ricochet off the walls:

- Seventeen! Eighteen!

A nimble businessman gnaws his nails like seeds: he saw how this picture was brought up, it was necessary right at the entrance to offer a million francs, and even take the painting away before the auction.

- Twenty one! Twenty two! Twenty three!

The most crafty of the journalists have long been in the room. Through all the cordons made their way. Nastya they also shoot the masterpiece of the twentieth century - the picture "The Second World War".

"Twenty-four million francs!"

Just then, in the far left corner, the hand of the gentleman in a greasy tie dropped. For twenty four both agree. But the gentleman in the left corner will not go above this. And the gentleman in the right corner? His hand raised in victory.

"Twenty-five million francs!"

In the right corner, the hand is raised. The left one doesn't.

- Twenty-five million francs - time ...

All heads are on the gentleman in the left corner. He is calm. He is unperturbed. He smiles slightly expressing incomprehension of the attention he received. His arms are crossed over his chest.

"Twenty-five million francs—two!"

The gentleman throws up his hands, showing the public what is higher

don't jump your head. The price bites a little...

"Twenty-five million francs... three!"

He banged the hammer into a sparkling plate: bom-m-m! Oh, what's going on here! Silence torn to shreds, into small, invisible shreds, tore like a dummy with an RGD-33 grenade.

Ladies and gentlemen roared at once, like camels demanding love. Crystal chandeliers rang from screaming, squealing and squeaking, from applause and clatter.

Journalists on Nastya attack:

- Mademoiselle Streletskaya! ..

- Mademoiselle Streletskaya, as an internationally recognized genius and leader of the Russian super avant-garde, what could you say about...

Police outfits (there were already five of them by the end of the auction) showed professionalism.

An intense massacre repulsed the attack. Personal security of an outstanding master-innovator

Mademoiselle Streletskaya is guaranteed and provided: fighting off pressure, the police managed to withdraw her to the next room. A painting was also evacuated there - one of the greatest achievements of culture twentieth century. An unknown person was carried there without mutilations and bodily injuries.

the gentleman who bought the painting. After that, regrouping forces, five police squads

with a sudden forceful jerk they kicked the audience out of the hall, and on the street the mounted police sweeping lynx, cutting through the air and someone's heads with rubber sticks, completed the rout, dispersed the surging crowds.

4

In the next empty hall, the bewildered management of the auction gives a reception in honor of the outstanding master Mademoiselle Streletskaya and an unknown gentleman who bought a masterpiece. Rather, in honor representative of that gentleman. The sound of glasses. The quiet rumble of stricken people. fuss urgently waiters called from a nearby restaurant. Everything is a stupid impromptu.

The director raises a glass of champagne and, not finding words for such an occasion, simply drinks. Together with him, he drinks a long one with a hammer. He had never made such a deal in his life.

The management will receive a tithe, and he personally will receive a percentage of this tithe. Tithing - two and a half million. Of these, the longest personally - twenty-five thousand francs. For a day of work. For what

shouted out the numbers. So that's not all: today he not only sold Streletskaya's masterpiece, today there were Shishkin, and Faberge, and Aivazovsky. That, of course, is trifles. But they are not on the roads of Europe either. lying around. He estimated for a long time how much he would get today - he does not believe himself.

In the hall, except for the great artist and the skinned gentleman, there are only their own. And still stuffing people. Victory always has many relatives. Champagne - boxes, boxes, boxes.

Between drinking and congratulations - formalities. Mr with frayed sleeves gives the director a check for twenty-five million francs. Signature: Cherveza.

Slight confusion: did Senor Cerveza know in advance that this would be the price?

To an unexpected question, after a short reflection, the answer was found: no, of course, señor Cherveza could not know what the price would be. Twenty-five million francs is the maximum, above this Señor Cerveza would not have risen. And if the price was lower, he would just send another check.

Here's how? Earnestly.

The check is accepted by representatives of the Lyon Credit, they contact Barclay. "Barclay" confirms the presence of such an amount on the personal account of Señor Cerveza. Between two banks paper exchange. The amount is transferred from Senor Cerveza's account to the account of the auction owners. Now from this amount the management will keep a tithe. Tax will be paid on the same amount. the state. The rest - the creator of the masterpiece. Accountant calculates interest and writes a check for 17,225,741 francs and 55 centimes.

Nastya accepts the check, smiles, and long in the ear:

- Bring back the officer Georgy.

- Why?

- I gave it to you as a pledge: if my painting is not sold at a good price, you can take it for yourself.

But it was sold at a good price. At a very good price. Return.

I don't know any George. Didn't take...

While he is talking, Nastya the Firebird calmly looks at her feet. But here he is for a moment paused, and then she lifts her blue eyes. Without blinking, he looks attentively at his bridge of the nose, as if trying to consider some non-existent speck. And he was led away from this look to the right. Clearly, you just need to look away ... It didn't work out. His long legs turned into stilts on loose hinges. They break down. He is aware of this, but he cannot help himself. Gem on the edge consciousness, which has not yet muddled, for some reason he represents the wooden hammer of the auction in her right hand. He tries to figure out where she's going to hit him with that hammer: on the forehead? in the teeth? maybe... He covers his teeth with one hand, the male nature with the other. He sees nothing in front of him except for blue eyes, and in them - a boundless, bottomless ocean of evil and hatred.

Then he falls across the table, hears but does not understand the director's cry:

- Again this long pig got drunk! I'll kick it out tomorrow!

5

Morning again. Nasty Parisian morning. gray houses. Grey sky. Gray rain. And the wind too grey. The wind drives sharp droplets in waves and cuts the face with them, like steel filings.

Nastya goes to get money. One. If she had Messer's abilities, then no problems. But she is just a sorcerer's apprentice. Inexperienced student. Beginner.

It is easier for her in Paris than it was for Messer in Moscow. And at the same time more difficult. Messer had hands a student's notebook instead of a passport, a check and all other documents. Him one notebook enough. And Nastya has a real check. It is issued correctly, certified by the appropriate seals and signatures. She painted a picture, Señor Cerveza bought the painting through an auction... And yet... "Barclay" may require a personal confirmation of Señor Cerveza: did you buy the painting?

Messer in Moscow did not risk anything - they would not give him money, the story ended there would. And then ... Here you can't get out so easily. The capture of a person, threats, torture, extortion ... For this in France everyone still cuts their heads, as in the days of Robespierre. And still severed heads keep watching and listening. Nastya's imagination is frisky. Introduced a sparkling blade guillotines. I wonder if she will squeal when she is dragged to the platform. Many scream. Good at us in civilized Russia: bang in the back of the head! And fall into the hole. And here in French barbarism ... Probably, she will ask the executioner: "Monsieur executioner, please do not pull the rope! Don't pull! Let's live for a minute! Just one minute!"

But while her head is not yet chewing on the basket. And no one is dragging her onto the platform to this barbarian death machine. Why don't you go to the bank? If they want to arrest her, then the best place, than a bank, do not think of. Or go? She has no money for a taxi. She has no money for the bus. She goes through the gray city and the gray rain. She goes, and in every kiosk there are her portraits.

Each showcase contains a photograph of her painting. And the boys with piles of newspapers run through the streets, shouting in every way the headings of the first pages:

"Shame on France!" Buy Shame of France!

"How did we get to this point!" "How come"!

"A question with no answer!"

"The whole nation will answer for this shame!" Buy! Buy!

"Triple Disgrace!" Hurry to see: "Triple Disgrace"!

6

"But it's strange, prince: she knew all of us before we had time to introduce ourselves to her. She

she knew everyone by name and patronymic, she knew who served in which regiment and who served with what orders awarded ... I wonder where such knowledge comes from?

- Another thing is surprising: she showed such knowledge, but none of us was even surprised by this.

Maybe she fascinated us somehow?

There are many obscure and suspicious things in this whole story. For some reason, we all obeyed her. They obediently obeyed. She gave instructions, did not consult with us. We are with her instructions agreed, for some reason we obeyed her, we carried out her orders.

- All this is true, but let's, gentlemen officers, admit another thing: the plan is flawless. She is everything foreseen down to the smallest detail. Everything she ordered to be done is full of meaning and irresistible logic.

"And yet, in the end, everything will fail. Judge for yourselves, gracious sirs, what the bank will voluntarily give four suitcases of money to some girl dressed in an incomprehensible what, girl who...

"She'll show the check and they'll arrest her right away. She will be forced to speak. She will betray us all, work the police is simplified by the fact that she remembers all our names and signs ... Then, gentlemen, all of us will open their heads with this vile barbarian machine. The French are very good at it.

"We have to leave Paris. And from France.

Who is going to leave? Are you Andrei Vladimirovich? Are you Yuri Sergeevich? And you, Count? And I, gentlemen, I remain. I believe in her luck. Did you pay attention to the interrogation technique she owns? That's it. This is a real inspirational poetess of interrogation with predilection. We've all been through Civil War. We saw a lot of blood, a lot of atrocity. Nothing will surprise us. But me personally she surprised me with the technique. She is the master of interrogation, the master of unattainable perfection. She is clearly this She has been doing business before, and no one has yet cut off her head ...

- If she did this before, then why doesn't she have money? And where is she like that trained in an unprecedented skill of interrogation?

- For the kidnapping of a person in France, heads are cut neatly; I don't know gentlemen whether we are from the guillotine, but we certainly will not see our orders.

7

She came in suddenly, pushing open the door. She entered and seemed to enter the basement with her danger. Silently looked into everyone's eyes, smiled at the corner of her lips:

"Here are your crosses, gentlemen officers. And help carry the suitcases.

Anastasia Andreevna...

She suppressed a smile; no one had called her that in a long time. And then suddenly her name and patronymic the ferocious Siberian ataman prince Ibragimov magnifies and, with his appeal, as it were, gives the order:

from now on, our companion is called only that.

- Anastasia Andreevna, is it worth returning the money to the Balerika bank? You wrote painting, Señor Cerveza bought it, what does Balerika have to do with it?

- We need to think about it. Set the two suitcases aside for now.

- So be it. And the other two suitcases, Anastasia Andreevna, we decided to share like this: the knowledge is yours, the aiming is yours, the plan is yours, the guidance is yours, your suitcase; us - eleven, and we have a suitcase.

- I do not agree. We are twelve. Everyone risked their heads. All equally.

CHAPTER 34

1

At the mirrored doors of the Alexandra, an haughty gilded porter, contemptuously politely spreading his arms, he blocked the path of the dirty gang: tyu-u-u, so the entrance is ordered here.

A hefty peasant, with a curly beard overgrown to the very eyes, the whole gang of ragamuffins an obvious head, stepped forward a little and, looking somewhere over and past the porter, launched a heroic five fingers into a bottomless pocket, pulled out a large new paper in mother-of-pearl patterns and intricate drawings, crushed it with a crunch between the fingers of his left hand, put the crumpled ball into his breast pocket Swiss livery, patted his protruding Swiss chest to be sure, and, letting forward a fragile teenage girl, the owner-bear stepped into the swinging door, not paying attention to bows and expressions of gratitude.

And to meet them from the stage, in defiance of the merry cancan, in defiance of the whole orchestra and at the will of the conductor, the first violin, tearing off a cheerful dance, suddenly burst into tears in an anguished voice drunk Russian officer. And, echoing her, at first reluctantly, at random, and then tightened everything more amicably Orchestra "Dark Eyes" And the conductor, realizing that the Russians were coming, no longer looked dumbfounded at the first his violinist, but, adjusting to the orchestra, with a smooth gesture he took over the leadership, brought the first verse to the sobbing end and, raising his hands to the sky, brought them down like a thunderer. The orchestra knew that Black Eyes was only a signal, it was only a saying, it was only perestroika and transition to the main melody, which must be started all at once and in full power. And obeying with a powerful wave, the orchestra "God Save the Tsar!" burst out.

And raised the hall.

It raised the hall not because everyone in that hall unanimously and touchingly loved the king, not because that everyone wanted someone to keep the tsar, who was shot twenty years ago, and therefore the hall rose, that the concept was worked out among people: the Russians have come, now they will begin to destroy the mirrors. AND muzzle. So that you don't hit the head with a bottle, it's better to stand up while the barbarians listen to the anthem, while they wipe away tears.

And the conductor, hoping for praise for the Russian gang, turned around: are we playing so loudly, are we furiously? Louder and impossible - the windows will fly out ...

But the conductor was embarrassed. And the orchestra too. And the melody somehow crumpled and faded away, fell silent musicians. The Russian girl waved her hand, saying, stop the comedy. For some reason the conductor immediately obeyed. He did not bother to look at the bearded man: should I obey?

The conductor looked around awkwardly, said something to his people, and victorious music burst out, but no one specifically not glorifying.

Russell. Steward - with a dozen ties: we, gentlemen, so it is customary. Well, knit Gentlemen, officers, silk, satin ties on decayed collars of tunics, on shirts, past Kuban and Kakhovka, Sevastopol and Constantinople, Sofia, Varna and Plovdiv, Belgrade, Berlin and Paris. A beautifully brand new tie looks on a once white combat tunic. By at least unusual.

- And something you, Anastasia Andreevna, do not like the anthem very much. To you "The whole world of violence we destroy" more to your liking?

"Your Excellency, it's not for me to explain to you that the Romanov dynasty ended suicide. The dynasty failed to hold on to power. She did not want. The one who himself renounced the crown, gave up his head. The crown was always only lost with the head. Is not it? So what kind of god is king should keep - who renounced the crown and throne? I hate to hear the voice of the grave self-destructive monarchy. And you, prince?

- Are you, Anastasia Andreevna, a principled opponent of the monarchy?

- Not at all. I am opposed to a weak monarchy.

2

And the booze broke out. Drinking without borders and clearance. Crashed on a French restaurant the madness of the Russian tavern.

The Russians ate. Everyone was fed. They treated guests and musicians, treated the director of the restaurant and manager. They sent a taxi for the owner. It is clear that he did not come by taxi. On your own car. And the taxi driver tiptoed into an unprecedented hall to report that he had completed the task. Russians treated the owner, his wife and daughter, treated the taxi driver, called the driver of the personal and owner's bodyguards. They are not allowed to drink while on duty. But they were also fed. They resisted and then under Russian pressure, they surrendered and accepted the treat.

The truth must be said: at first - in small doses.

3

- Prince, but it so happened that she treats.

- And what?

- The old law: whoever feeds the people is the master. How would she like you, prince, from the commander's did not move the place.

- And I'll give in. She is the devil in a skirt. For a long time I wanted to get a job as a deputy.

4

Nastya called the chief manager, whispered with him, and soon uncle appeared

fussy at Nastya's back. Nastya nodded at Prince Ibragimov, the fussy prince measured with his eye, disappeared. Then he beckoned the prince with his finger into the adjacent hall, and very soon the prince appeared in dress, in which rarely anyone in Paris walks. The whiteness of the eyes of the shirt stirs against the background of the blackness of the costume and gloss of lacquered boots.

And a wild horde of Parisian tailors jumped out from behind the curtain with scissors and needles. In an instant, the ragged gentlemen were measured, and each one had a fitting right in the hall next door. There they suits dragged a stack of a whole. Everything is already sewn, just tuck it up, just fit it pull up. And the choice of shoes is like in Okhotny Ryad in the glorious times of the New Economic Policy. And shirts, ties, cufflinks, socks and other things - a whole collapse: choose, gentlemen officers, the Firebird favors you all ceremonial attire.

And in the orchestra, balalaikas appeared from somewhere, and the gypsies are already dancing, knocking on a tambourine.

Only to change people's clothes... I don't like dressing up, but I must admit: dressing up is a serious matter. They dressed up gentlemen officers and seemed to turn them into other people, the nobility lost on their faces returns...

The prince looked around the crowd, the orchestra fell silent, the gypsies calmed down.

- But Anastasia Andreevna could not understand us. She dressed us, shod us, fed us, gave me a drink, sweetened my ears with balalaikas, and my eyes with dancing gypsies. And what are we? .. I heard that the glorious name of Faberge lives on, and his cause wins ... Anastasia Andreevna, we are here with the gentlemen officers consulted, and decided to plant you ...

5

— Comrade Stalin, all experiments have been carried out. Our people fired at a training target in the presence of the biggest assassination experts. According to agency reports, not a single expert figured out what happened. Everyone went on the wrong track, everyone thinks that this is the invisible Messer have worked.

- This is good. Messer's reputation needs to be strengthened.

We are spreading rumors.

"And it's time to apply the SA weapon system in the present case. Who would you, comrade Holovanov, advised as a combat goal? Who will be eliminated first?

- Don't know.

- Do not know?

- Don't know. - The dragon is stubborn.

"Then I know, Comrade Kholovanov. First we eliminate the Firebird. This is your honor task, comrade Holovanov.

The dragon looks under his feet:

- This task, Comrade Stalin, I will not carry out.

- You will not?

— I won't.

Stalin broke character. Stalin subjugated everyone. Nobody resisted him. And here comes the riot.

The most faithful performer...

"Listen, dear, if you don't complete the task, there won't be another one ... And then who will? Firebird will still be killed. Once I ordered. Do you understand that, Comrade Holovanov?

"I understand, Comrade Stalin. I know they will kill. But I won't kill her.

- Sit down, dear, here's some water for you. Maybe you want some vodka? Cognac? - In one gulp Dragon knocked over the glass.

- Still you?

"More, Comrade Stalin. Get drunk and do what you want with me.

"Why don't you want to kill her, Dragon?"

- Because I love.

6

Prince Ibragimov grinned, took out a flexible ribbon from his pocket: on white gold with an ornament intricate blue sapphire flowers and white leaves studded with diamonds. Sapphires huge, clear, and the diamonds are small, small, like moon dust. That's why the light crushes diamonds a million surfaces at once, that's why the ribbon in the prince's hand, like a star that has fallen from the sky, burns, shimmers, does not seem to reflect light, but she radiates it like a waterfall. With a snake in his hand that ribbon twisted, flashed like a Spanish knife in the moonlight. You can have that ribbon around your neck, and there will be a necklace unearthly beauty. And you can tie around your head, like the ancient Slavs with a hair strap bandaged. If around the head - the diadem will turn out.

The prince figured it out, evaluated both options and didn't even try to wrap it around his neck, buttoned it up secret lock, made a ring out of the ribbon and carefully placed it on Nastya's head, like a wreath of field flowers. He took a step back to assess from the outside, and his breath caught: the prince wanted something like a precious strap to decorate her forehead, but the result was a sparkling crown. Why is the crown then Nastya the Firebird turned into a princess. Not the imperial crown turned out, no, but thin hoop, exactly the crown that the princess is supposed to have for a solemn occasion. No, the prince knows Ibragimov, that she is not a princess of the Romanov family, knows that she is the daughter of Count Streletsky, and knows her pedigree until the time of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, only ... In it, after all, before the princess was felt, but no one realized it. It happens: the artist does not sleep at night, himself tormented, went through a hundred options, not a damn thing. And here is one stroke only, and lit up the picture from the inside came to life, the noblewoman Morozova sighed, her eyes sparkled, she lifted her fingers over

head, the sleigh started off, drove off, creaked ...

Only one stroke ... Here it is, this stroke - above the sapphire eyes of a sapphire ribbon sparkling ... And - that's it, and it's not clear how it was that the princess had not been guessed in her before?

But not that struck the prince. I realized: the crown-diadem can be removed, but the princess will remain.

It was this thought that struck down not only Prince Ibragimov, but also all gentlemen of the officers: at the head someone unearthly is sitting on the table. No, she is not a formally official princess, of royal blood, but she is a real princess, from a fairy tale, sent by someone to command the sinful earth.

This is how we are arranged, the contrasts amaze us: a ragged girl at the head of a luxurious table in a company of men, exquisitely dressed, with huge eyes and a crown on their heads with a thin ribbon.

Captain of the Life Guards Hussar Regiment Igor Shevtsov rubbed his eyes and quietly, so as not to heard at the other end, expressed surprise in Russian:

- Wow, infection!

And captain Sinelnikov examined everyone with a drunken eye, saw a discrepancy: she dressed everyone, shod everyone, and she herself is a beggar. The captain stood up, overturned his chair, staggered a little, hiccupped, paws the purple velvet curtain with gold embroidery grabbed it, and pulled it towards itself, breaking off the rings bronze.

He picked up the curtain, bowed, and wrapped Nastya in a mantle.

This is where the booze entered its decisive stage.

7

Before you start drinking, you need to take care of the removal of bodies. The place must be chosen in advance. where to dump the bodies, and work out the evacuation system.

Everything worked out. Everything is provided. In the suburbs of Paris, by the Bois de Boulogne, even before the booze Nastya looked after the empty mansion behind a stone wall. There is no furniture, but that's good. Base in In any case, she needs Paris, and then she will choose the furniture to her liking. Good mansion: a couple of floors, an attic, a stone cellar under the whole house, a neglected garden. Need to repair furnish with furniture. Therefore, Nastya ordered now only to bring mattresses, vodka on a hangover and a barrel of pickled cucumbers from a Polish store.

At the very morning, Nastya delivered the screaming gentlemen officers to her new mansion in three taxis, scattered them on mattresses with taxi drivers. For almost twenty years, gentlemen officers - hunger and humiliation. And then - they got it ...

In the evening, they began to depart, and closer to the night, slowly, reluctantly, a hangover flared up, imperceptibly, slowly developing into a new booze.

"And what will our mistress order?"

This is said as a joke, as if seriously.

"I command the formation of an officer regiment.

The officers responded with a roar.

- Command the regiment - to Prince Ibragimov.

- Glad to! Thanks for the trust!

- The structure of the regiment: commander, headquarters, intelligence and counterintelligence, four combat battalions, rear services. Prince Ibragimov!

- I'm listening.

- Your Excellency, appoint yourself a deputy, chief of staff, chiefs

reconnaissance and counterintelligence, reconnaissance company commander, battalion commanders and

rear chief. You are eleven. There are enough people for all positions. And let the commanders

battalions tomorrow morning start recruiting people and form their units. White

there are a whole horde of officers in Paris. If it's not enough, we'll whistle-dumb-boom around Europe. At first in

we will install one hundred people in the reconnaissance company, and three hundred in battalions. intelligence chiefs and

counterintelligence immediately start recruiting agents. Let's drop everything and organize a regimental

treasury. The head of the rear should take her into custody and answer for her head. In the coming days, the treasury

we will fill the regiment. I have options.

"What's the name of the regiment?"

Nastya thought:

— Our first victory in Compiègne. Therefore, I command you to name the regiment of the Life Guards Compiègne.

The officers roared. Only Prince Ibragimov did not show joy:

"Gentlemen, this is not a joke. The Life Guards regiments are created for a reason, they serve sovereign. And we don't have a king.

And they all fell silent: right.

"Or the Empress," Nastya added.

The prince agreed

Or the empress. - Shrugs his shoulders: they say that this addition changes, sovereigns with us also no.

Nastya the Firebird rose above those sitting:

- The question is over. I will be the empress.

CHAPTER 35

1

First grade. A compartment is like a small apartment. Two wide windows. Nastya is alone here. In the neighboring coupe - security. And on the other hand, a coupe. There is also security. In an open window - a hot wind from the south.

She's funny. And in order not to laugh, she reads Parisian newspapers. She reads articles about herself.

Amazing things are written in the newspapers.

"How could great France not see such a giant of painting? Inconspicuous Mademoiselle lived among us, but we did not pay attention to this explosive talent. And this is the shame of France. She left our country. We don't know where. We don't know if she will return. We were not smart enough courage to keep it. And it's a double shame. The great work of Streletskaya was bought unknown who and is unknown where. Perhaps the masterpiece is already outside our country. Ministry culture, the government as a whole did absolutely nothing to keep the greatest work in our country. And this is the triple disgrace of France."

"There can be no second world war. The world has had enough of one world war. Who else needs one war? But then an artist of unprecedented talent and temperament appeared - Mademoiselle Streletskaya, - and with her magic brush she depicted what cannot be - World War II war!"

"The main mystery of her talent is the choice of colors. Red and black! Most dramatic chord colors of all possible. And yet: why only black and only red? But that's not all. At red, like any other, can have thousands of shades - from the delicate color of spring dawn to the color of a winter sunset, that is, almost burgundy. From a thousand shades, she chose exactly those which are in keeping with her grand design. The choice of red and black colors is clear and extremely logical. Anyone in her place would have chosen these colors. But why did she choose these shades? This is the main question of our time!"

"And yet the main thing in painting is the frame! It's funny, but only at first glance. Let's think about it: fake gold, filthy with millions of flies, alabaster dust on chipped corners combined with bold, inspired strokes of the master! What symbolism: rotten old fake peace and a heroic challenge to it, shocking all who do not understand the greatness of genius!

"We can only guess how many years this sorceress of the brush carried a brilliant idea, considering options and nuances. But we will not be surprised if we learn that this feat she has been preparing for creation all her bright life.

2

A huge timber carrier "Amurles" is moored at the wall. In an endless row of the same timber trucks. Pennants curl, chains rattle. Lots of work for the crew. Not immediately Captain Yurin people ashore let go: we will do the job, then we will go out.

And one person went down the ladder. For some reason, no one noticed him: neither the officer on duty, nor border guard. I wouldn't say it's invisible, not at all. Just people walking by, no attention pay.

Cranes creak in the port. Winches screech. The movers use foul language like Parisian taxi drivers. A shunting locomotive whistles, the steam breathes, a dozen wagons of round timber pull in a cloud of smoke. Once upon a time there was a plain on the seashore. Now - the mountains to the clouds. Mountains of the forest. Komsomol forest Motherland! Everything is for export!

Right next to the water, next to the iron, there are crane cranes: they load, load, load. And huge empty Timber trucks are gradually sinking into the water - deeper, deeper, deeper. They loaded the timber truck, and he went to infidel lands.

In the gorges between the stacks, between the cyclopean pyramids of logs, in the heady the smell of pine taiga is easy to get lost.

The one from the ship got lost. It can only be seen by one person to whom it is open, who is waiting for him.

- Hello, sorcerer!

— Hello, Dragon!

- How did you sail the seas?

- Badly. It torments me. I feel that something happened to the Firebird. What?

"Sorcerer, you were right. And Comrade Stalin lost the argument. He considered her worthy contender, I doubted, and you categorically objected. You won the argument. She got out from under control. Comrade Stalin must now, in the presence of all members of the Politburo, crawl under the table and call yourself a goat.

- Where is she?

— I was in the Balearic Islands. Now, the agents report, in Paris. I contacted myself scum: in Spain - with the financial oligarchy, in Paris - with the Whites.

- Well, pour me a drink, Sasha. Do you have? - The sorcerer called the Dragon Sasha for the first time.

Sasha Dragon looked at him gratefully. The Dragon has many enemies, a lot. Enemies hate him. The Dragon has many subordinates, subordinates are respected and feared. Have The dragon is a harsh boss, the Dragon serves him faithfully. The Dragon has a lot girls in parachute circles, in the Stalinist guard, in special groups, he loves all of them, love to all gives with royal generosity. And they love him. The dragon has no friend. There is no one to share the Dragon with. Not because there is no friend, because he is a wrong man. The man is what you need. Look for those. But work at

Dog dragon. Too bogged down in Stalin's secrets. Can't say a word. What the hell friendship, if he is talking about his life, about his work, he has no right to even hint. Officially a pilot polar. Why, you won't talk all the time only about bears and ice floes. And so a person appeared in the Dragon Life with whom you can talk. About everything.

- I always have, sorcerer.

The Dragon took out a bottle and two glasses from a wide pocket. Sat on a log. Newspaper spread out. The Dragon poured, the processed cheese was fraternally divided. They raised the borders...

A nimble, vigilant border guard surfaced from behind a stack: his neck is thin, like a bayonet a three-line Mosin rifle of the 1891/30 model, and a thin voice:

- Oh, you - get drunk! Don't you know that it is forbidden in the port?

The border guard turned to a huge man in a leather coat, with a glass in his hand. His For some reason, the valiant guardian of the frontiers did not notice his interlocutor. And then the second one, unnoticed, passed through so many seas, turned around wearily:

- Get off.

The border guard answered clearly, as the charter prescribes:

- Eat! - And fell off like a slice cut off from a loaf of bread.

- What will happen to you now, Dragon?

He wanted to shoot me for a long time. Now, apparently, the turn has come. Dragon poured himself some more. AND sorcerer.

- We drink. You know, sorcerer, I still can't take my head off, but take my advice. Stalin lost the argument and now must publicly call himself a goat. Have pity on your head, sorcerer, this don't let it.

3

Obtaining citizenship of a foreign country is not easy. But Nastya was lucky: there were kind people, gave her citizenship, issued a new passport and all other papers. Need many years in line stand, and it fell out so badly that the line quickly approached. For one day. In Paris, she did without any I was driving my passport. In Moscow, she was taught to travel across borders without a passport and without visas. And now she decided to travel not in the hold of a ship, not on the roof of a freight train, but in comfort, with dignity. This requires documents. Here they are in a brown crocodile leather bag. AND guard with her with all relevant paperwork. The commander of the Life Guards of Compiègne himself Regiment Prince Ibragimov accompanies her:

- It would be nice to move the ninth company from the third battalion to Geneva. There in the mountains Swiss, in Alpine meadows, there are whole herds of our clients.

- Agree.

"The fourth company did a good job in Lyons. Shocked debtors. Treasury replenished.

- This is good. But I, prince, have a purely theoretical question. We quickly make new and new millions. However... However, a pair of good shoes is a dollar, five is a great suit, three hundred dollars - "Lincoln", a thousand - a decent two-story house, with basements, rooms on loft, with swimming pool and garage for three cars, with a piece of land. So why do people need millions? At do you have an answer to this question?

- We have.

- Tell me, prince, how much money would you personally like to have?

- All.

- As everybody? - Nastya did not understand.

- All the money in the world.

- For what?

"Everyone has a choice in life: either bite everyone, or ..." The prince looked out the window open to sweeping French expanses, scratched his beard. - Further obscene. But there is literary option: gnaw all or lie down in the mud. Each of us is on an icy mountain. If you don't climb up slide down. You need to have a billion in order not to be devoured by the one who has a hundred million. A You need to have ten billion so that you are not eaten by someone who has only five of them.

4

A great country is waking up. At the British Embassy, a million-strong crowd with red banners from early morning yells a song:

Chamberlain

old fuck

We are threatened

Parasite!

They yell the same song in a different way:

We are threatened

Chamberlain

Parasite

Old fuck!

The good thing about the song is that, no matter how you twist the lines, it will still be funny. Another song is shouted from

call to the Ural blacksmith:

Blacksmith, forge weapons, -

We'll show Chamberlain our... answer!

The British embassy - here it is, behind the wall of the Kremlin, across the river. Morning paints tender the color of the walls of the ancient Kremlin. And from there, across the river, through the Kremlin wall, like a storm in Bely sea: fuck! horseradish! horseradish! strike! strike! strike! horseradish! horseradish! horseradish!

We have a conscious people: the British Chamberlain is far away, we have no common borders, and to fight no reason, because all the anger of the people against the old crap Chamberlain. And Hitler is close. Side by side. Because our people have nothing against Hitler, they don't sing obscene songs about him, German embassy does not bare his teeth. Understanding population: if Hitler decides to fight against Chamberlain, so let him fight and not worry about his rear - we are also enemies of Chamberlain, he, they say, we even threatened once intended something. And to you, Hitler, we have no complaints, and to scold you there seems to be no reason, and there is no need for us to hold demonstrations at your embassy ...

The crowd is yelling, but Comrade Stalin cannot sleep in his Kremlin apartment. Not because not maybe the crowd is yelling, but because the heart hurts. It hurts for the state, for the fate of the World Revolution.

The country is waking up. The country rises with glory to meet the day. The country has fallen asleep. And the whole world Same. Only Stalin did not sleep, thought thought. The time has come to restore strength by rest, but not to fall asleep it turns out. How can you sleep here? Riot in the immediate vicinity. He loves her! And what? So the orders can you not do it? So what? He loves her! And then who will kill people? He loves her... Ah if everyone loves someone, then who will make the world revolution?

— Comrade Shirmanov!

- !!

Shirmanov was always close to Stalin, but never personally received orders from Stalin.

— Comrade Shirmanov, do you know the Firebird?

"I know, Comrade Stalin.

- An honorable task for you, Comrade Shirmanov. Choose a liquidation group. Will you go to Spain. Objective: Eliminate the Firebird. Performer ... - Stalin thought for a moment. —
Performed by Makar.

5

If you have been given the task of leading a liquidation team, then you need to start by collecting and analysis of information about your client.

There is a lot of information about the Firebird. But such is life: no matter how much intelligence gets

information is always in short supply.

It is known that the Firebird is a rabid enemy of the new socialist culture, the leader most disgusting of all trends in bourgeois decaying art, a symbol obscurantism, serving the reactionary imperialist bourgeoisie. The characteristic features of her "creativity" are anti-nationality, nihilism, the denial of everything valuable and advanced, created by previous generations. She painted a picture deeply hostile to the worker class, the World Revolution, the Soviet Union, the Bolshevik Party and Comrade Stalin personally. This she completely exposed herself in the face of the world community and all progressive humanity. The capitalist world enthusiastically welcomed its new corrupt maid and paid for her "creativity" at an unheard of price: 25 million francs for a "painting" in four strokes - more than six million francs for each smear. Paying such a price for a monkey "art", the bourgeoisie of France and the bourgeoisie of America standing behind its back expressed their bestial hatred for the world's first state of workers and peasants and the most progressive in world of Soviet art.

In addition, it is known about the Firebird: it appears in front of everyone and just as suddenly disappears. Where it appears, where it disappears, is unclear. Information has been received: it is tightly guarded.

It is also known that the White Guards suddenly became more active all over Europe. Cause activation is unclear. According to the reports of agents, previously fragmented and dispersed organizations white officers suddenly, at someone's command, acquired a slender, purely military structure. IN White had significant financial resources at his disposal. It is clear that activation beaten officers of the white armies can only be aimed at undermining the international the authority of the Soviet Union, to damage it, to prepare for the overthrow of the power of the workers and peasants. Obviously, Western intelligence and financial resources of the world are behind all this. bourgeoisie. There is reason to believe that the Firebird is a link between Russian White Guards and international financial capital.

6

No one expected her return at the Balerika TS bank - she appeared here once, noise did it, drew attention to the bank, then disappeared, said something in parting, something promised. Are we promised too little?

She walked straight into the boardroom of the bank. She interrupted her speech with her appearance. chairman. Realizing that she had interrupted, nevertheless she did not ask for a word, did not apologize. She smiled at them all. The sitters looked at each other, silently asking each other whether it was worth smiling in answer. And then she, with a broad gesture of an illusionist, waved towards the door: halo-op! Door dissolved, and two bank employees brought in - rather dragged in, dragged in, dragged in - two suitcases,

They placed him in the middle of the hall, bowed, and left, shutting the door behind him.

All eyes from Nastya to the suitcases, from the suitcases to the chairman. Chairman, no words saying, came up, pushed the suitcase. The suitcase fell on its side, with a sound announcing that the weights in it in excess, like books stuffed. Chairman and another pushed. And the other made a sound like the roof blew.

Chairman on Nastya: so what? Open - Nastya smiles. Suitcases with locks, but the locks on the keys are not locked - just press the shiny tabs on the springs and they will bounce, clicking. In addition, the suitcases are girded with straps so as not to open by chance. Unbuttoned the chairman belts, no one helps him, everyone sits in their seats, spellbound. It's interesting that will be further. The chairman threw back the cover and squealed.

The suitcase is stuffed with heavy multi-colored bundles: dollars, francs, marks, pesetas. discarded chair cover from the second suitcase. And yelped again.

In principle, such weights can not be carried. A bank check for any amount - that's all just a piece of paper in your pocket: easy and convenient. But in Paris, the gentlemen of the officers had to be defeated by the look packs neat and here - too. Here they are, admire, gentlemen financiers.

But how can one manage to carry two heavy suitcases full of money through border control and customs? ABOUT! It's simple. I explain: you need to carefully look into the black a dot in the nose of the controller and quietly say: "And they are empty."

Who will object? Nobody objected.

7

She was given a chair. Sela Nastya. This is not the same ragged thing that recently washed the windows. This is a woman business-like, in a strict suit, somewhat similar to a London banker and a little like a gangster from Chicago.

This is your half, gentlemen. You have a whole phone book of debtors. If you want further repay debts, here are my conditions: fifty-fifty. Fifty-fifty. You will receive half their debts. The rest is mine. If you do not agree, deal with the debtors yourself, write letters, and I will find a job. You are not the only one with debt problems.

The financiers looked at each other. And the general director of Balerika TS Bank silently nodded.

CHAPTER 36

1

I lost. You, Messer, were right. As you warned, the Firebird immediately came out from under control. She broke like Kashtanka from the chain. Drive up tonight to my nearest dacha, there everyone will. Let's drink, let's eat. I'm not proud. I've never been wrong about people. And then ... Once I lost, I'll climb under the table, I'll call myself a goat ...

"Today, Stalin, I can't. Thanks for the invitation. Headaches... Next time, huh?"

- Let the next one. How I got it wrong, I still don't know. But you too, Messer, sometimes you're wrong. I've been wanting to ask you for a long time... What were you talking about in the Berlin circus?

Rudolf Messer had been waiting for this question from Stalin for a long time. I myself wanted to tell him, but somehow the moment was not right.

"Didn't they tell you that I chatted there?"

- Reported a hundred different answers. And everyone is very smart. And it seems to me that you froze nonsense. By I see you. You are ashamed of your own answer.

"Yes," Messer confessed, "he blew it, his ears are still burning." It's good that everyone misrepresent, and even ashamed to walk the streets.

"So what did you say?"

- He said that Hitler would go east ...

- What nonsense. First, Hitler will go against France and Britain. Until with them untied, will not go against us. Germany cannot fight on two fronts. This is suicide. Why would Hitler commit suicide?

"I understand all this. But you blurt out sometimes..."

"You, sorcerer, are just tired. You need to take a break. Do you want to go to a resort? I have a house in Yalta small... There is no one there now.

- No, I just want to save energy on performances. Can I drive through your country?

— Go.

2

In a beautiful Mediterranean city, a quiet but enduring sensation: the fading "Balerika" blossomed. Moved up. Steam locomotive. Competitors are interested: what is the secret of success? Most the nosy ones sniffed out: the general director of Balerika had long been looking for an employee with phenomenal mathematical abilities and found - senorita Anastasia so money believes that the bank only profit.

And others say that the CEO just found an employee who convincingly with knows how to speak to debtors, to each debtor - an individual approach, such arguments for everyone finds that debtors immediately return all debts, and even with interest.

They also say this: she is a witch. What kind of eyes! Brings every morning to the meeting Directors, two empty suitcases each, look at them - halo-op! And the suitcases are filled with money.

Nastya did not think, did not guess. But a waterfall of orders fell on her. With "Balerika" special relations, but why not help other banks? Because the first battalion of the Life Guards Compiègne regiment in Paris works. The second is in Madrid. The third and fourth battalions along the coast, from Gibraltar to Monte Carlo. For some reason debtors in the Mediterranean resorts love to hide. A reconnaissance company tours around the world. Debtors in They hide in Washington, and in Melbourne, and in Havana.

Where is the headquarters of the regiment?

3

Voroshilov, Kuibyshev, Kirov, Stalingrad ... The sorcerer raises the excitement of the Soviet (most grateful in the world) audience, its delight. Begins with those questions that the answerers themselves will give. Gradually moves on to those questions to which they do not know the answer. Then rises to those questions, the answers to which will plunge the public into ecstasy and madness.

It is not for the sake of money that the sorcerer works in the circus. Not at all. He gave up money a long time ago. Good for him six mugs of beer in the evening, and a vigorous schnitzel, and a downy featherbed, and portly girls five ... He doesn't need more.

Not money for the sake of the sorcerer bypassed the circuses of the world. Circus is training. Like a good pianist from the dawn before dawn and after it, he beats the keys with his fingers to the bloody calluses, so does a sorcerer with a big the audience must constantly work.

Otherwise, a loss of qualification. And where to work - all the same. Remember the rule: questions are always and everywhere the same. In Munich, in Bristol, in Plovdiv or here in Cherkasy.

It is clear to everyone: there are no sorcerers in the Soviet country and cannot be. There are illusionists. It is not given to everyone to pronounce this word, because Messer is called a comrade:

"Tell me, Comrade Messer, what is the name of my wife?"

- Friend Vasya, have you yourself forgotten her name? Here she is sitting next to you. Her Marusya name. Marusya, are the blue shoes that you bought yesterday at Zapsibselprom too tight for you?

From trifling questions, the sorcerer leads the audience to more and more complex questions. But need to exercise caution. That Stakhanovist worker clearly wants to ask where he went Comrade Yezhov Nikolai Ivanovich, why about the favorite of the people, a true friend and comrade-in-arms Stalin has not been heard lately. The sorcerer in the eyes of the shock worker reads the question,

knows that the worker is at the forefront and overfulfills his plans in the squealing line, because he the fate of the all-Union master of informers is of interest.

Witchcraft is easy. Rudolf Messer knows that the people's favorite, Yezhov Nikolai Ivanovich, now, at the moment, is writhing during the investigation. Katya Ivanova works with him. Which woman! The sorcerer blinked. Smiled. I remembered something.

And the question of Yezhov must be prevented. Those who want to ask this question should not be noticed. Or to wish him to choke on his question.

The advanced worker coughed and choked. They shushed in the back rows: come out, you bastard, don't interfere representation.

They kicked the front man in the neck. The presentation continues.

"Tell me, Comrade Messer, how much money is in my right pocket?"

In front of him floats a huge, whistling, growling, roaring circus... The sorcerer majestically lowers hand, and with it silence descends, enveloping everything and conquering everyone ... The last question programs. Thousand hands. The sorcerer led the audience to the brink of insanity. Seems to be between him and the audience discharges, sagging, of monstrous force, as if between earth and sky, illuminating everything around and crushing everything that gets in the way ... So, the last number of the program, the last question in last issue ... The question has already been asked, and the answer will plunge the circus into a frantic, seething and bubbling delight...

The public must be brought to the brink of insanity and then allowed to ask the most important question.

- Tell me, comrade illusionist, will there be a war?

Rudolf Messer is in no hurry to answer, Rudolf Messer looks around the audience with a strange look, trying to look into the eyes of everyone, and answers confidently and quietly:

- Will!

And an explosion of frenzied joy throws up thousands of enthusiasts from their places, and the outfits of the valiant Soviet militia beat off admirers, and Rudolf Messer bows in a flood of flowers.

4

The head of the police of the Balearic Islands, Senor Dufados, has a visitor.

The visitor is well-known, respected on the island.

Hello, sir chief.

Hello, Fire Bird.

"I have business with you.

"I hear you, Bird of Fire.

"Señor Dufados, a new world war is rising over the world. We don't know where it will break out and in which direction it will turn.

"We don't know that," the big police chief confirmed ruefully.

"For the duration of the war—and it seems inevitable to me—I would like to stay on Balearic Islands, to live here by the warm sea, not to touch anyone ... But I'm a foreigner, besides - poor orphan.

- How can you help here?

- I don't need help. I would only ask you not to find fault with me in vain. In business I won't climb the police department of the Balearic Islands yet, I won't interfere with you. Would it's good that you...

No one has ever talked to the chief of police like that. He set that tone for himself. like polite insolence ... There is something behind this ...

The chief of police knows a lot about Senorita Anastasia. She is the killer. True, do not judge her If it turns out, no one will testify. Fools talk that it was an angel who protected her. A you can't fool the boss. It was definitely reported to him that she killed with a look. Because against her no one will testify. The people know: they will strangle with a glance. On the other hand, the rumor on her side, the people believe - there was self-defense in its purest form. It was not necessary for the magnificent Rodrigo lash out at her. It is known for sure: she gave him two thousand pesetas to get rid of it, so he didn't think it was enough. Here I got it.

The chief of police did not ask any more questions. And she doesn't say another word. said. She stood up, bowed politely, took something heavy out of her purse - a small package. The size of a cigar box. Wrapper - rough letter paper and cross-stitched rope. put on table.

Small volume, big weight. Lead or...

The package hit the table hard, making a wonderful ringing sound. Not a pig. In the boss's mouth dried up.

Five hundred? Or a whole kilo? Another question: what is the test? One thing 375th - thirty-seven with a half percent pure metal, the rest is an impurity; another thing is the 585th.

The chief of police screwed up his eyes: maybe the 750th?

For long service, the big police chief was used to receiving gifts. And the rule firmly learned - do not touch the gift with your hand, do not take it in your hands until the visitor leaves. In which case: I don't know anything, you never know what is forgotten on my table!

And I want to touch the gift to the boss. I so want that Nastya feels it, because her no longer embarrassed by the presence of the boss, she bowed slightly again, smiled and went. The big police chief got ahead of her, opened the door in front of her, kissed her hand ...

No, this is not how I tell it: first I kissed the handle, and then I opened the door. To those who in the waiting room, it's not supposed to know that the chief of police kisses someone's hands during office hours. AND,

already throwing open the door, he realized: how can I be useful?

5

The boss closed the door. Then he dissolved it again, growled so that no one would be allowed in to him: business of the state! He sat down at the table, glanced at the bundle, without turning his head—something sideways. He took a deep breath, picked up the bundle, realized: not five hundred, not kilograms. And two clean ones.

He weighed it in his hand - heavy. That way you can kill if you have to. And it's good that it's not money. Money can depreciate at any time. Yes, he has plenty of money.

Once again, he threw a gift on his hand. He put it on the table in front of him, tilted his head straight to the very table, like Beria over a plate, like a little boy who caught a fly in a jar. I wanted to carefully cut the string with clerical scissors. Changed my mind. Two short with thick fingers he took the string by the long tail, pulled, and the bow fell apart, untied. Then the chief opened the paper. Flashed in the office. A beautiful ingot. Eagle on an ingot, stamp "SBS" and numbers - "999".

6

And where to place the headquarters of the Life Guards of the Compiègne regiment? In case of war, everything in the center Europe, inevitably falls into the whirlpool. Declaring yourself neutral, not declaring - will not help. Switzerland? Cut a tunnel in the rocks? It could be. But there is no certainty that war will not take place in Switzerland. will affect. There are arguments for the fact that it will remain neutral, but there are arguments against. But on peripheries of Europe... The same Spain. The same Balearic islands ... And the climate here is resort. people here lived for a long time. They knew where to live. The islands belonged to Carthage. Then the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Spaniards. For thousands of years, invaders and pirates raged on these shores. Because seaside towns survived only if they defended themselves. Beautiful Palma was surrounded by a wide and deep moat carved into the rocks, behind which rose indestructible fortress walls with mighty bastions. Fortified city. And also on all approaches, on all roads leading to the city there are forts and castles. Some of them are now abandoned...

The place for the command post is to be chosen by the chief of staff. Lieutenant Colonel Igor Shevtsov chose. If you jump out to the west along the embankment from Palma, then right outside the city outskirts in the sea crashed into a rocky promontory. Like the tip of a spear. About three hundred meters into the sea it took out. At the coast is narrow, then wider and wider, and then again narrower, narrower, narrower. Rumbles for millions of years surf on piles of rocks. In foam and roar, in the sunlight, the cape hangs like walls sheer above the furious sea, as a symbol of disobedience. Mother nature that cape with intent created that people would build a fortress on it. In principle, you don't need to build a lot - rocks they break right into the sea, and a hundred meters wide isthmus leads to the cape. His only need

protect. On any other side, the assault will not work: the waves thresh against the rocks, and the rocks covered with underwater stones: neither a ship nor a boat can approach.

In fairness, I must say: here along the coast every three kilometers such you can find a cape above the sea. Nature with a generous hand scattered gifts to fortifiers - each the cape is covered with sharp and frequent, like the teeth of a dragon, islands and rocks, only the isthmus cover, and no one will climb that cape. It was on such an isthmus that the cars stopped. slopes steep near the sea, closer to the top - gentle, and the top itself is flat, all overgrown with forest. There the residence of the Senorita Anastasia is being built. Three sides views of the sea and coastal cliffs, city and port, on the fourth side - mountains in a light haze.

The cars in the shadows quieted down, the doors slammed, the guards turned around. Chief of staff Regiment Lieutenant Colonel Igor Shevtsov reports on the work done, leads the hostess into the house. Here he is, in the thickets. This combination is amazing: palm trees, pines and cacti. From here, from the land side, from lush vegetation, you can see only flat roofs and blank white walls. gigantic the width of the windows and terraces are turned towards the sea, and from here they are not visible.

Path in dense thorny bushes. Suddenly, right under your feet - a cliff. It's seven hundred years ago A moat was cut across the rocky isthmus - eight meters deep, fifteen meters wide. Walls with a slight slope, almost sheer, gray, bushes and stunted trees in the cracks. So with side of the isthmus to the house will not drive up. Across the moat is a temporary bridge on metal supports.

— Shall we build a permanent one?

— No, Anastasia Andreevna. Now we need a bridge to build a residence. Let's finish

construction - we will disassemble the bridge. For cars, we will cut a descent into the ditch in the rock, and from the ditch - into the tunnel.

- And how do you think to strengthen the moat?

"Here, during the Civil War, the Germans brought one hundred and ten tons of spirals from barbed wire. I bought it on a whim. And then the good is lying around. We think the bottom of the moat cover with these spirals, leaving only one passage.

- Maybe put mines under the spirals?

- Let's put it. The mines have been ordered, with pressure, tension and unloading fuses.

There is plenty of goodness here.

Halls, rooms, wide-ranging terraces over the sea are of little interest to Nastya - show the main thing.

- From the side of the sea, your residence is solid glass, like an aquarium. The palace seems fragile. But this is only an impression. The basis of the building is an impenetrable reinforced concrete cube, around which deployed all these pieces of glass and terraces. Let's go in.

Everything here is still splattered with paint, and the windows have not yet been washed, the smell of lime and concrete that is barely drying no stronger than the smell of the sea and pine needles. And the broken glass crunches under the foot, and the ends of the wires

electrical sticking out of the walls. And the armored doors have already closed the entrances to the inner chambers.

The elevator silently slid down into the depths. Here, too, is still far from complete. But still the future command post is already alive, teletypes are already chirping, the duty shift is already receiving and processes reports on searches and finds.

And already the commander of the Life Guards of the Compiègne regiment instructs the battalion commanders. Instructs briefly, assertively, harshly, without choosing expressions:

"Nature knows no compassion. Only suppression! The old law: either bite everyone, or ...

Crush everyone! Press!

CHAPTER 37

1

On the first floor of your residence, there will be security, headquarters and a communications platoon. A we will all work below, in the rock massif.

- Where is my office?

- Right here. To your right is the main working hall, on the contrary - four offices: commander regiment, mine, the head of intelligence and the head of counterintelligence.

Nastya entered her rocky office. The chief of staff realized that now he must leave his mistress alone. He bowed slightly behind her and quietly left.

White carpet throughout the floor. The ceilings here are low, so the office seems wider. Walls by her ordered to be finished with thick cork slabs. And according to her will, someone prepared the office for work: on the walls, the laughing faces of the debtors of Balerika, Sa Nostra, Lyon Credit, VBR, Andalusia, Lloyd, Barclay. Under each portrait is a brief reference: name, surname, year birth, place of work, position, place of residence, amount of debt. This is short. And completely about each in folders. Interesting people among the debtors: generals, deputy ministers, ambassadors, even the secret adviser to the President of the United States hit the wall here, a certain John Hassel - elegant, young, handsome and strong. Nastya smiled at all of them: see you soon, dear comrades.

She sat down at a wide table of precious wood. Phone battery on the right, battery on the left. As everybody it looks like Stalin's underground city Moscow-600. Only here the scope is not the same, but Nastin the study and residence upstairs are much wider than there, in the Zhiguli. There she is almost nobody. One of many. Here is the empress.

2

Captain Yurin knows: in the corridor "A" passengers are secret. Landing again on the islands Balearic. Some people are going somewhere...

3

The liquidation group landed from the Amurles without incident. Group - seven people: Shirmanov - commander, Makar - sniper performer, Edik - radio cipher operator and four saboteur raiders.

Night. Boats are inflatable. Meeting in the dark with support agents. Dash into the rocks ancient caves of smugglers.

What do you hear about her?

"I hear a lot, but it's not so easy to see her. She doesn't show up anywhere. And if appears, then suddenly, without warning. And her guards are almost like those of Comrade Stalin ...

4

Shirmanov has good binoculars. Zeiss. Shirmanov rocky cape for long hours considers.

- Strengthened, infection. Like in Gibraltar. Have you never seen her?

- No, the palace is high on a rock, and the first floors are covered with forest, and on the roofs and upper only the guards appear on the terraces.

Do you think you can't see her?

- It's impossible here. The palace was built in such a way that its inhabitants could not be seen from the side, and even more so to shoot at them. That's not all. The palace on the rock is the tip of the iceberg. Everything, that important - in the rock. They cut the rock day and night.

And no one pays attention to it?

- She acts like Comrade Stalin: all her actions are for show, because no one of her actions don't worry. A large construction is underway, and the stone is unnecessary by a conveyor belt thrown into the sea. Everything is legal, everything is right. But who would have seen how many thousands of cubes of that stone they have already thrown into the sea! On the one hand - a shelter in the rocks, on the other - around the cape they clog the approaches to ships and boats with stones.

"Listen, are there any catacombs under Palma?"

- Wow! What more! In Odessa, a shell stone was chopped down for less than two centuries and the floor was chopped mountains thousands of kilometers of galleries under the city and another two or three thousand kilometers in the suburbs. You think: four thousand kilometers? And here the stone was cut for thousands of years.

"Is she cutting the exit to the catacombs?"

- She obviously cut down her command post in the rocks with supplies and shelters, and if connects its dungeons with the catacombs, then we won't get it at all. Can you imagine? She can appear at any time in any part of the city, outside the city or in the port. We are waiting for her here, and she is already on a luxury liner to New York!

- She, the infection, also loves to change clothes. Dress up as a ragamuffin, emerge in some alleyway, go and recognize her on a city street...

5

A white Rolls-Royce rustled with tires, the driver bent in a bow, the armored door plowing open. And he carried her car to the haven of wealthy people - to Son Vidu.

The road to Son Vidu does not bode well. Everything is up and up. And on the sides - groves

rare twisted trees. Here, under the scorching rays, everything burns out. The grass is burning out. Burn out tiled roofs. The can lay by the side of the road, gleaming like the silver radiator of a limousine. And two weeks ago the bank was not like that. It was fiery red, with "Coca-Cola" written in white. stumps that jar, and it turns out that only from above it is sparkling, and its sides are pink, and what is below, and remained fiery red, and left swirling white curls - Coca-Cola. That one is lying around the jar is still under the sun, and that red side will also burn out, turn into a silver sparkle.

Pines in the Balearic Islands are sparse, crushed to the ground by scorching heat and dust. sprinkled. This clay is burnt dusty. And from the dust of that all the villages and churches, and thousands of mills broken - all red. And the leaves on the trees are smeared with the same dust.

The car is rushing higher and higher. And the sea sparkled in the distance. And the harbor filled with yachts barrel with Okhotsk herring. And a handsome French battleship on the horizon, in silhouette - "Strasbourg" or Dunkirk.

Here, at a height, the vegetation is richer and the air of purity is intoxicating. Carried "Royce" gorge - and stop. Police cordon: strictly here, on the approaches to "Son Vida".

In Britain, you have to turn around the corner to see the beautiful life. And in Spain for this you have to go through the gorge and the police cordon. There, beyond the gorge, the climate is different. There are groves tangerines in the freshness of the mountain wind. The police saluted, and the car rushed in a steep spiral up the cliff to the old castle. It was with him that "Son Vida" began. Then to the castle they built it, planted gardens around it, filled the corners with flowers. There are many hotels in the world - like stars in the sky. And among them there are a thousand of the best. And in a thousand of the best - a hundred magnificent ones. And in any hundred is the best ten. So, "Son Vida" is confidently in the top five of the world. "Dream Vida" is for really rich people. "Dream Vida" - a quiet corner for persons crowned and for people with big money. Who else will allow themselves to spend money in "Son Vida"? Sheikhs only oil. Well, still leaders of the trade union movement, servants of the working class. They are bourgeois life they hate it, and that's why they are drawn here, like a prostitute to a monastery, like a detective to a thieves' company...

The gatekeepers at Son Vida are majestic. The car door is opened with a gesture that is thirty years old need to be processed. The gatekeepers bowed to the traveler, saluted her bodyguards: Welcome.

And inside - silence. And tapestries on the walls, and marble colonnades, into the darkness of coolness leading ones, and panels of Russian oak, and weapons on those oak walls. So steal what kind of pistol of a forgotten century and would fit it over the fireplace in my house. And photographs of Generalissimo Franco. Not upside down, as it was customary for Nastya at the training point, but upside down. And his signature gratitude. Like, I've been here, I have no complaints.

The staff at Son Vida is a special breed of people. The doorman in "Dream Vida" looks at the world as a wise cat, understanding everything and forgiving us petty pranks. The uncle in the lush mustache looked at the señorita

Anastasia, I know. Everyone knows her...

Past the bronze cannons - into the palm grove on the slope.

Nastya loves "Dream Vidu". A good place. If you save a little more money, then you could "Dream I see" and buy. Everyone gathers here. States lose here. Here they sell and buy factories and railroads. This is where the exchange rate and inflation rate are set...

In the rock under the "Son Vida" would cut down a bunker and take information from one hundred and twenty-four microphones. World War rises above the world. Big war. This is the time to make big money. AND big politics. And in order to make decisions, you need to know the situation ... There would be a conference arrange a capitalist, like a congress of the communist party, organize a vote on Stalinist method...

6

The job of a sniper in war is one thing. In war, a sniper sat in a shelter and waits for someone to will appear. A beautiful target appeared - an officer leaned out from behind the parapet, a tanker from the hatch - bam him... And wait for the next one.

And the sniper performer has a completely different job: not just anyone to shoot, but the one who is ordered. Here there are many problems here. The one who is ordered is in an armored car with black windows. In First, you can't pierce that car with an ordinary bullet. Secondly, if you pierce the car with a bullet armor-piercing, then what's the point? Hole in the car. The bullet will whistle over the ear. You scare the client will be more careful. And the devil only knows: a car with black windows is winding around beautifully. city, and the client may not be in the car. The client, having changed into a sackcloth, from his palace in a garbage truck can leave ...

Keep a sniper-executor for several days at the object in the hope of an accidental appearance client cannot. There could be all sorts of consequences here. And all negative.

You need to know exactly the time and place... Otherwise...

7

Messer is not sleeping. Doesn't sleep. He told people what they wanted to hear. Will there be a war? It's clear, will! And even very soon. The Soviet people are waiting for this war with impatience and joy. And myself Comrade Stalin announced that now it is already beginning, and it has already begun, and it is raging!

Why do people want war so much? Why are the Soviet people waiting for it with such joy?

It seems to Messer that the war for the Soviet people will be completely different from its own represent the impatient.

But maybe he is wrong?

After all, he made a mistake there, in Vienna, on the square in front of the parliament, when a hungry artist

warned him not to go east. Now the artist wrote "Mein Kampf", does not starve more, he became a German chancellor. And again Messer publicly gave him a stupid warning issued - do not go to the east. Why, in fact, do not go to the east? Messer himself is incomprehensible what he wanted to say. What, not a single step east from the Imperial Chancellery? Or none kilometers east of Berlin?

Messer is not sleeping. Maybe he talked nonsense about the Firebird? He was against her. He proved that she would not make a queen.

So the devil knows.

Messer did not allow Stalin to publicly climb under the table and call himself a goat ... From Moscow the sorcerer left to prevent Stalin from crawling under the table, himself in front of his comrades-in-arms disgrace. But fear is not the reason.

Something lingers. Something somewhere doesn't fit. Maybe Stalin is right? Maybe the dispute is not yet finished?

CHAPTER 38

1

He no longer bypasses puddles. No need. The wind had blown his hat long ago, and the rain had soaked him to the last button, to the last stud in the shoes. Soaked through the raincoat and jacket. soaked so that a handkerchief is in your pocket - and that one must be squeezed out. The rain is pouring, and it goes through the wind and water.

Go around the puddles, don't go around - it doesn't matter. He goes from darkness to darkness. He walks with a grin head in the collar. Pulled up the collar. Soaked. From the collar to the bosom - thin streams. If you press your neck to the collar, it will not be so cold. Here he presses his neck to the collar.

Drops of snowflakes on the black glass of houses and blurt out. And falling under the feet - the drops rustle, crunch. And only after soaking the boot and warming up slightly, those drops into ordinary water they turn and slurp in their boots, as in worn-out pumps. Heavy, swollen trousers covered the legs. Water from the pants in streams - some in the boot, some past. And from the darkness on him - scary eyes: "Soviet illusionists are the best in the world! Hurry to see: Rudolf Messer again in Moscow!" And from the other wall, from the darkness, the same eyes look at the wet man. And from the third. In this Sorcery is not recognized in the country. Officially. Because Rudolf Messer is simply called here magician illusionist. From all the walls of Moscow, the magician's eyes bore into the darkness. Posters at three floors. The rain splashes on those posters. The wind tears water streams from the roofs, crushes them into the eyes throws a magician, but from the walls the eyes attracting in the dim light of lanterns look through the water, penetrating her.

The last days he was haunted by the Firebird. She came in a dream and told Messer that that's good. At night, the sorcerer's apprentice got in touch. Reported. And he smiled at her in her sleep praised. I woke up and didn't remember anything. But she reported something very important.

2

"Makar, do you remember how you and I secretly filmed a masquerade ball for all these future kings and Kaisers?

- It was business.

- You know, Makar, I just realized why Comrade Stalin needs all this ball staged a masquerade.

- For what?

- It's simple. Comrade Stalin announces his most important plans to the whole world, but no one does not believe. And here he brought them all together, each has a phenomenal memory, each of all

remembered the rest. So: if one runs away and tells the Stalinist plan, then they will not believe him and a yellow house will be planted. He knows too much. It's unusual. And to check such a fantastic version no one mind is not enough.

"Does that mean we were sent here for nothing?" If she starts talking, they still won't believe her.

— No, they sent us not in vain. If Comrade Stalin ordered someone to be liquidated, then there is for that reason.

3

Sleep Makar. What to him? His business is veal: this SA contraption is in order to keep, drink and eat, sleep, of course - to remain calm, not to worry, but at the appointed moment for sure shoot.

And Shirmanov and the whole group have a working day of 18 hours.

The firebird must be tracked down. Go try it! In general, it is unclear whether she is here or in Paris. Or in Havana gone? And she stopped appearing from her fortifications. The only exception is "Sleep Vida. But how do you know in advance that she will be there?

4

An elegant, young, handsome and strong male bowed and introduced himself:

— John Hassel. U.S. State Department Minister Counsellor.

Nastya gave her hand for a kiss, also introduced herself:

- Anastasia.

Recently, for some reason, she likes to introduce herself this way: without a surname, without titles. and titles - just Anastasia. So it seems to John Hassel. He is from London. Rather, from Washington. I was at a conference in London. And from there he was brought to Palma. He stopped at the best hotel of the Balearic Islands, Spain and the entire Mediterranean - in "Son Vida". He's been here before. He was here until July 18, 1936, until the day when the radio of Madrid and Barcelona transmitted prearranged signal: "Over the whole of Spain, clear skies." The Spanish Civil War has been brewing for a long time, At this signal, the war broke out.

The civil war is the time to make money. John Hassel made money. But the war ended. It didn't end as nicely as I wanted. Hassel hoped that the bank "Balerika" in the course of war will be ruined. But the bank did not fail. The bank withstood, survived, and, according to information, it is gaining strength. This is not to the liking of the Minister-Counselor of the US State Department. He arrived at three day and did a lot. The main thing is to bypass the old bank managers who know him, discover new ones, start relationships. Hassel found out: the management team is mostly the same places. There are no new people in the leadership. However, there some seigneur showed up with them,

She apparently does not have an official position, but she is close to the leadership and, perhaps, knows something.

And what is her name? Anastasia? Where to meet her?

The main thing is to have reliable sources of information, to make friends with knowledgeable people.

They prompted: the whole society of the Balearic Islands gathers in the evenings at Son Vida. And she is there

it happens sometimes.

And here is Hassel in Son Vida. They nodded at him: that one, in sapphires.

He invited her to dance. I answered: I don't dance anymore, I swore. He took her to the wide terrace. Down the slopes are paths. Along the paths, among waterfalls and lush thickets of palms and palm trees, orchids and roses, tables under colored lanterns.

He is a diplomat, he is polite, cunning and assertive.

Are you alone today?

- I'm always alone.

- Will you allow it? "And he's already with her, and he's already telling her about life in Washington. He makes her laugh and she laughs.

It is necessary to carefully find out why the Balerika did not collapse. And John Hassel suspects Worst: bank executives changed policy, no longer send letters demanding money to return, but with an iron hand they took their debtors by their white breasts, by their throats, and in general for all sorts of other things to grab on to. Therefore, it is required to sniff out the secret of the survivability of the bank. You don't have to wait until somewhere in Washington amidst a noisy ball, cheerful Guys... We need to act. Hassel does not yet know exactly how to act, but in any case it is necessary to bank management to make connections, need a source of information ...

He's lucky. A young girl in management - what could be better? In the guide boobies: how can you let this happen to banking? Clearly, she cannot know who is in debt. knocks out, but she must know something ... That's what Hassel needs. It's not hard for a handsome man to have girls recruit - they themselves run after ...

She is so young, so open... John Hassel talks about himself and his life...

He might not have done it. And I could not introduce myself: my clients Senorita Anastasia knows. Hassel has been hanging on the wall for a long time in her underground office, attached with buttons. She knows, how Hassel made money: a petty US State Department official got access to small piece of information. The piece was small but tasty: in the summer of 1936 in Spain a general rebellion is possible, which will inevitably lead to civil war. That's all. Knowing this, an American official came to Palma, flashed his belonging to the State Department and under took a large loan at Balerika with huge interest. There were no plans to repay the debt. believed, that Balerika will collapse during the years of the civil war. I invested in my career. Rise high. Minister-Counselor is a diplomatic rank, the last step before the rank of Extraordinary

and ambassador plenipotentiary. But it's official. Five people in the world know he's a secret helper President Roosevelt. Five people - this includes the President of the United States and Hassel himself. In this list Nastya the Firebird fifth. Hassel believes that only he, the president, and two others know this secret. Hassel did not take into account a trifle: the fourth one is also a debtor of Balerika, for lack of money paying with secrets.

Nastya knows that Hassel can't return his debts either: a secret assistant blew the money president. He invested money in a risky business, the risk was not justified. This is an agency from Washington. reported. In Washington, a group of captain Sinelnikov is already waiting for a secret assistant, to talk it is necessary ... And meanwhile the privy councilor himself arrived here. Decided to personally find out when "Balerika" will give up the spirit.

The fact that Hassel was in Palma was reported to Nastya at the very moment when he showed his diplomatic passport passing control.

Nastya was informed that she was interested in the management of Balerika Bank at that very moment, when such interest was shown. Hassel is looking for contact not with veterans in the bank's management, but new people. And it was also reported.

If he himself is looking for a meeting - please ...

"You know, Miss Anastasia, I need your help.

- Everything in my power.

— I have a certain amount of money that I just feel uncomfortable investing in United States, can you tell me...

- I'll tell you. There is a great bank. It's called Ballerina...

— "Balerika"?

- Oh yeah!

"I heard Balerika went bankrupt.

- You have been misinformed. Balerika is thriving.

— What are you talking about! This cannot be. This is impossible to believe.

"But it really is.

- How could this happen?

Do you want to know the secret of success?

- It would be interesting.

I will reveal this secret to you in the near future.

That same night, close to dawn, the messenger-counselor was abducted at the exit from entertainment venue in the Plaza Mayor. The Minister-Counselor was convincingly explained that the money must be returned. And if there is no money, you have to pay with something else.

For example, secrets.

5

If it is impossible to penetrate a given object, then it is necessary to look for adjacent objects.

It is impossible to get on the rock on which the Firebird nested - they will shoot, and the corpse to the sharks fed.

But there, on an impregnable, guarded rock, grandiose construction work is underway. Who are they performs? Who is the architect? Where does he live? Who is the chief engineer? Where to meet him? Who supplies cement, glass, metal? Who supplies construction equipment and maintains it? And feed the people necessary. Who supplies the meat? Who is the fish? Who is fruit? Who are vegetables? Who - flowers to the table of the hostess? If a security guard needs surgery, which hospital will they take him to? Who and where repairs limousines? How many of them, limousines? Who is driving them? Who supplies gasoline and in what quantities? Is there a yacht? Where is she? Who is guarding the yacht? Where does furniture come from in the palace? Whether there is a does the inhabitant of the palace have friends? Do they have access to the palace on the rock? Who are these friends? How are doing? Where live? If they don't have access to the rock, where does she meet them? Who supplies the water gas, electricity? How many phone lines connect the rock to the rest of the world?

You can ask a million more questions and get a million answers. Shirmanov asks questions.

All agents are on their feet. Many, many things have been collected, but it's not possible to push things off the ground succeeds. For an assassination attempt, in order to make a single shot successful from a huge distance, you need to know the exact time and place where it will appear. You need to know her plan.

But as?

6

Shirmanov was thrown over the bed. We see fragments. And you have to see in in general... Three pieces of information merged into one.

First, she loves dressing up.

Secondly, Shirmanov took control of many adjacent objects, but it is necessary to find and take under the control of one more object - an atelier, one of the best on the island or simply the best, in which a rich, very rich woman orders her outfits.

Thirdly, her plans are not known, but the plan of her favorite hotel is known. In "Dream Vida" - balls, conferences, carnivals.

Carnival! Here he is! Carnival! April 13th! Starting at seven o'clock!

Only the Shirmanov guys fell asleep - wake up, clay heads!

"It's urgent to get information about the five best studios in the city!"

- Eat!

- Sniff out all about the carnival costumes ordered recently: who ordered what and to whom.

- Eat!

- And the last thing... Encryption to Moscow. Ask at the Kremlin atelier what costume for her
sewn for a prom masquerade, and all sizes...

7

Carnival for a woman is not just dressing up. Carnival is an opportunity to visit
in a dream. Therefore, women with a stable taste have an equally steady craving for a masquerade to dress up in
costumes, different in color and shape, but the same in design. This information is from elementary
psychology.

They reported to Shirmanov how many women's masquerade costumes were ordered in the best ateliers
of the glorious city of Palma, they reported who ordered the costumes.

Ambiguity with only one luxurious outfit. This is the costume of the shamakhan queen. Who ordered,
unknown. Judging by the size, a small, thin, slender woman will be dressed up in it. Dimensions
Here they are on paper.

Shirmanov took the piece of paper, went to the window, checked it against the reply code from Moscow... And beamed.

Most recently, for a graduation ball at the Moscow-600 facility, the Firebird ordered a costume for herself.
Shamakhan queen. And the size is the same.

CHAPTER 39

1

On a rocky cliff there is an old castle. It was with him that "Dream Vida" began - they attached it to the castle buildings are luxurious, the gardens are unfolded and spread out. And around - the valley of billionaires. horseshoe around are wild mountains. No one is allowed in here. That's why the guards are posted in the gorge near the bridge, at the only way into the valley. And besides, there are police posts at every hundred meters. Here patrols with dogs prowling: let all sorts of millionaires there tremble with fear, and people the really rich, the people with billions, should live in peace. Deserved. They are for security pay. That is why they are protected. vigilant. Because strangers are shot here without warnings. To the slaughter! Therefore, packs of Rottweilers are lowered here in pursuit of any uninvited. To break!

In the green valley - white palaces. Palaces have blue pools. The whole valley is lemon gardens and palm groves. Thundering pure streams run from the mountains through the thickets of flowers. By the sea salt marshes shimmer in reed thickets. From there below - dog barking and screaming chase. The guards have caught someone and will not calm down until the offender is shot in the head. Dogs don't subside until the intruder is torn to shreds.

Far around the mountain with the castle and the hotel, around the billionaire valley - gloomy ridges semi-naked ridge. The ridge curved into an almost complete ring. Where the circle of distant mountains is broken, sparkling sea. By the sea is a city. It can be seen from here as from an airplane. And a wide bay - on a sparkling In the mirror, a lazy sea animal lies a British battleship with her retinue. This, of course, is Nelson himself. And six destroyers accompany him. The Nelson has a completely unusual silhouette. Straight nose. The board is low. But this is an illusion. The board seems low because the battleship's hull is gigantic length. And equally gigantic width. From the nose almost to the very middle of the body the upper deck is bare, like on an aircraft carrier. And only almost at the center - the first gun turret main caliber weighing one and a half thousand tons with three monstrous cannons. Behind her and a little higher - the second same gun turret. Next is the third. The entire main caliber is ahead. add-ons, masts, chimneys, gun turrets of universal caliber, boats, launches, anti-aircraft batteries - everything it is shifted aft. What do you confuse with such a silhouette? There is only one other ship in the world with such exactly in silhouette - the British battleship "Rodney", one with the "Nelson" series. But everyone who he is interested, knows that at the moment "Rodney" is in Singapore. So "Nelson" is not to be confused with anyone.

2

The summer of 1939 is drawing to a close. The world is calm. By capitals, by naval bases and

garrisons, military airfields and arsenals, diplomatic missions and espionage residencies are the usual fuss.

And away from the hustle and bustle, on the top of the cliff on the shady terrace of "Son Vidy" - a magnificent masquerade. Everyone is here. Only one very important guest is missing. Clearly, everyone is dressed up in costumes are unrecognisable. But they recognize her. By handwriting. If it appears...

Here she is! She can be seen from afar. From the terrace "Son Vida". Far in the gorge near the bridge because of elegant horsemen appear from the police cordon. Two topless muscular the purple blacks are restrained on silver chains by a black stallion ready to rear up.

It should be noted that the purebred black arap is black with a blue tint. And it's not just black found, but blue with purple stains.

In a saddle embroidered with gold is a Persian lady: from under a silk, entwined pearl threads of a turban, through a transparent veil - a capricious squint. Behind her is a cavalcade shining retinue...

3

Makar turned his optics. In addition to the scope and powerful binoculars. in the group - German anti-aircraft optical rangefinder.

"We won't get her into the gorge. Let him ride through the valley and climb the rock to the hotel, we take it right at the entrance to the terrace.

- Understood.

— Range?

Three four hundred and ten.

Elimination group - between two huge stones, on a rocky cornice. Around the valley rocks. Who will guess what can be reached from such a distance?

- Target: a woman in a turban on a black horse.

I see the target. I understood you.

"Now look here.

Shirmanov put a large photograph in front of Makar. Makar's heart sank. This is the one what worries Makar in his dreams.

She was killed once!

No, Makar. She was tested once. They gave her a control execution. And now her really need to be killed. Ready?

"Ready," Makar replies without flinching.

- Be proud, Makar: Comrade Stalin put you personally on such a thing. Do not you know, Why did Stalin's choice fall on you?

- Don't know. - The voice breaks.

- I will tell you. This girl was shot for control. As is our custom, the control shooting was filmed. Uncle Vasya filmed. Then you comrade Stalin film twisted. Comrade Stalin drew attention to your indifference. After Makar, you are in her dream called. And more than once. Recordings of your screams are filed in daddies. And, remaining alone, you are a film about her yourself twisted for himself. Two hundred and forty one times. Then it was decided to show it to you from afar, on a special plot. You recognized her. Fluttered. But he didn't believe it was her. Thought it was just similar. So the thing Makar, was it?

- So. Makar wheezes.

"And now the choice is yours: will you kill her yourself with one shot, or will you give up the honorable job to me?"

Makar sighed. And Shirmanov is cheerful:

- The old rule: gently press, do not breathe, hold the fly evenly. Hold your breath and slowly...

Ready? Are you ready, I ask? Fire!

4

A storm is roaring over Moscow, bending bare trees, whipping branches on the walls and windows. cold in Moscow. It's disgusting. And Stalin's apartment in the Kremlin is warm and quiet. Sleeping Moscow. Stalin does not sleep. By darkness in the corners of the office. But warm darkness. Kind. Friendly. On the work table is a green lamp, and on a small coffee table - also a green lamp: two islands of green light in friendly darkness. And dinner for two. Bachelor. Bottle of wine labeled homemade, homemade. The name is one word in indelible pencil, Georgian pattern. kebabs fiery.

Conversation - a forest stream on pebbles.

"Would you like another drink, Comrade Kholovanov?"

- No. Thank you Comrade Stalin. Enough for today.

"Then get down to business. You promised to tell me something interesting about the Firebird, something like that, which I don't know yet.

Holovanov exhaled noisily. I tried to contain the noise. It didn't work out.

Today the sentence will be carried out. She will be killed, - looked at the clock, - in seven minutes.

Stalin got up, went to the window and looked at the drops with crystals for a long time.

- Present award material for all participants in the execution of the sentence.

- Eat!

- When they return, meet them as heroes. Dinner roll up. Solemn award ... Then Makar to be arrested... and liquidated.

- What article?

- Don't know. Come up with something. If there was a person, there would be an article. Stick any.

- May I also Shirmanov?

Silent Stalin. Looked into the Dragon's eyes carefully:

- And Shirmanova for what?

- At one time I ordered him to find Messer. Shirmanov did not comply with the order ...

Stalin looked once again into the eyes of the Dragon:

- OK. Maybe Shirmanov. Reward first.

They were silent for a long time.

"It's good, comrade Kholovanov, that you didn't agree to kill the Firebird. Knew that between something was you; I have arranged for you, comrade Holovanov, control. She is the enemy. But if you killed her, then I would reward you first ...

Stalin fell silent again. And he was silent for a long time.

"I feel sorry for the Firebird, Comrade Kholovanov. Messer was right. She shouldn't have been sent to work. She should have been left here. Under control. She would be of great use. I didn't listen Messer... Where, by the way, is he? Missed him.

"Here I am, Comrade Stalin. Sorry - no invitation, no knock. Just got in now...

Then Stalin and Holovanov saw him.

- Oh, how wet, you know. Dry off.

Stalin pours "Khvanchkara": drink, warm yourself, dear. So without you, you know, I feel bad.

Holovanov runs with a towel, with a Stalinist robe, with a blanket: sit down by the fire.

We're talking about you here. You were right. She shouldn't have been sent to do something like this.

- Comrade Stalin! Then he flew in from Siberia to...

We killed her.

"I didn't know, but I felt trouble. Killed in vain.

"She's out of control.

You cut down a tree that could bring golden apples.

What other apples?

Do you understand what she did?

She didn't do anything!

She had a brilliant exit.

- Care.

— Where did you get it from? She legalized. Carried it out exemplary. It will be possible later give her as an example: the Spanish, French, Swiss police have no questions for her, and if they arise, she has something to answer.

She doesn't communicate.

- We ourselves taught her this way: 93 percent of failures in undercover intelligence are in touch. Because in at the very beginning - a deep occurrence and no unnecessary contacts. Communication - only in the extreme in case she needs help or if she has information to pass on. Help her need not. None. She herself provided herself with documents and money, her own operations on a large scale, it is ready to finance without our help and very generously. Success in mining she has modest...

"And nothing better is expected.

Messer already suffocated ...

- No, Comrade Stalin! She did the preparatory work in a way that no one had done before. spent. She gained access to the lists of debtors of leading banks in Spain and France. Not everyone enough money. She has access to lists of debtors on all continents, including debtors in Washington itself. A person who desperately needs money is almost ours. All you need is this money to offer, to offer skillfully. And she knows how. She can entangle the spy web of the capital Europe, and maybe Washington. She only had to choose from the list of debtors, as from the network, the fattest breasts. There are many petty debtors. At the same time, people get into debt big people. They hide their financial collapse and are ready for anything for the sake of money. I don't know who is in these. lists, but it could be anyone, even an adviser to Roosevelt himself ...

Messer stumbled, realizing that he had hit too high.

- Well, not an adviser to the President of the United States, but a deputy minister, a Pentagon cipher officer, a secretary director of the Federal Bureau, chief of police of the capital, damn it. She only remains choose who to recruit.

"So she didn't run away?"

- Of course not. We misunderstood her. She is in disguise.

"It's too unusual..."

- She is my student. It was I who ordered her to look for an unusual path. The most unusual. Such, according to which no one has gone before. One on which no one will suspect a Stalinist scout.

— She painted an abstract picture!

- And you wanted her not to deviate from the canons of socialist realism?

- She was carried into the arms of the White Guards!

"Did you want her to join the Spanish Communist Party?"

"She got in touch with the bankers and entered their circle!"

- And you wanted her to start with the organization of collective farms?

Messer, I have nothing more to say.

- You know, Stalin, because in some ways she even surpassed you.

- Me?!

"You were robbing banks, and she decided not to rob banks. They must be protected, taken under patronage, covering with a warm wing. I was against her. This is what I lost. Call the Politburo I'll crawl under the table, I'll call myself a goat.

No need, Rudolf. We've all lost. We underestimated our Firebird. It turns out she She worked for us like no one else did. She followed the instructions exactly and didn't break a single one. We didn't understand it. Let's not talk about this. You won't change anything here. It is at this moment that she is killed.

6

The head of the eastern mistress, the Shamakhanskaya queen, splashed. The horse rushed, got furious. The headless body fell from its saddle. Howled and roared around. Panic-tantrum, misunderstanding multiplied, suppressed at once everyone on the terrace of the Dream of Vida ...

Somewhere far, far away in the clear sky rumbled. This is how it happens in Spain. Sometimes. And they screamed squealed around: "The Bird of Fire has been killed! The bird of fire has been killed!"

People didn't understand what happened. And the police didn't understand. This is clearly not an explosion. But it's not a bullet. The bullet punches a hole, not smashes the head into disgusting gray spray. And there is nowhere for the bullet fly in. From below, from the valley of billionaires, she could not have flown here - the wrong trajectory. And from the mountains neighbors are also far away. Therefore, there was not even a version about the pool. More likely the head shattered by heavenly power...

You can't argue with that conclusion. Everything is clear here. To whom it is not clear, let him look for another version.

7

Far below, in the valley, the dogs choke with barking. Someone is running away. And here, on the ledge between stones, quietly.

Makar's rollback hit him in the shoulder. The sound of the shot distorted the muffler, threw it into the clouds. From the sound this snake in the stones started up and the lizards ran into the shade.

The group has nowhere to go. You can admire your work. Loves a man, it's hard having completed, contemplate the labors of their results. It was not easy to track down the Firebird. Tracked down. It is not easy to break the head with one shot. Broke. And ready to fulfill any task of the party and governments!

Through the scope, through the binoculars, through the optical rangefinder, the group is the result of the work oversees. Panic is there, at the "Son Vida". Nobody understands...

Shirmanov hit Makar on the shoulder:

- Well done! Know that if I had refused to shoot, I would have sewn you right there and from this

"luger". And so you order. I don't know about Lenin, but I definitely deserve the Red Banner. And me too.

Makar stroked the gun with the strange name "SA". Strong thing. Spewed out the shutter sleeve.

From the sleeve there is a light smoke and a bitter smell that you want to inhale. And from the open breech

- the bitter smell of burnt gunpowder and gun oil ...

Here Makar and lit up. The meaning of the mysterious abbreviation "SA" was revealed to him: Stalinsky Argument.

EPILOGUE

Clear skies over all of Spain. Here, in Spain, there are no heavy prolonged rains. Tem more - rains with snow, with crunchy drops-crystals. Rarely-rarely - a gloomy abomination. As an exception. And, as a rule, there are warm Mediterranean showers here: streams of pure heavenly waters from the transparent sky suddenly fall on the earth and rocks, on the seas and ports, on bridges and roads, to mills and taverns, to smoking locomotives and fleeing travelers. Water suddenly overflows the dry beds of streams and rivers with roaring muddy streams, carrying mighty boulders, stones, and uprooted trees, and cesspool mud of cities, and a cart gaping merchant, crushing and mixing it with fragments of granite cliffs. Water from heaven breaks suddenly and all at once. And tropical peals rumble, and lightning crosses the ringing sky, and through a thunderstorm the sun shines with unbridled joy, decorating the sky with unprecedented rainbows. AND everything blossoms, and the drops sparkle and tremble for a long time on the broad leaves.

But again, the unearthly overseas African heat embraces Spain, dries up the lands, swamps and river beds, drives a beautiful country into a heavy sticky midday dream with nightmarish visions. Under the sun of Spain, under its sky, stitched with rays, along hot steep ledges through the thorny thickets, like a golden lizard, a flexible grubby boy inaudibly glides ragamuffin... Forward and up. To the top. To the old castle. To the beautiful hotel "Son Vida". There is no place for scumbags here. Rogues are not allowed here. That's why the guards are posted in the gorge near the bridge, at the only passage to the valley of billionaires. And besides, there are police posts, there are patrols roam with dogs. Strangers are shot here without warning. They shot at our beggar and a pack of dogs was unleashed on him. But the ragamuffin did not pass through such cordons. Habitual. Went away from dogs. The trail is confusing. Now - up. Higher and even higher. Below is a green valley with toys white palaces. Below are the blue pools. Below are lemon orchards and palm groves. Through thickets of flowers run from the mountains thundering clean rivers. By the sea, salty shimmers shimmer swamps in reed thickets. From there below - the barking of dogs and the cries of the chase. The guards won't calm down until the offender is shot in the head. The dogs will not subside until the intruder is torn to shreds.

Beautiful Spain, we will give you your due: you also have enough atrocities. With excess. Better don't get caught. Therefore, the grubby one rushed to the swamp, through the blades of sedge, through the buzzing mosquito ringing, through the chugging of the swamps, went into the dry, crisp undergrowth and now, suffocating, sour sweat with erasing his face with his sleeve, he goes to where his appearance can least be expected: to the top rocky mountain, to "Son Vida", where there are more dogs, where the guards are meaner, where they rumble, ring masquerade. All those who rule Spain and Europe have gathered there.

If there is a war, then here, on the Balearic Islands, it is not bad to have an illegal residency. Gibraltar is nearby. And Barcelona. And Africa. And France and Italy ... The sea is called the Mediterranean for a reason.

Here the knot will be tied in any scenario. For any reversal event from the Balearic Islands a divine view opens up on a strategic situation...

But people do not see the approach of war. The sailors do not notice the breath of a close war "Nelson", neither their commanders, nor journalists on the shore, nor deputies in parliament, nor diplomats in embassies, no generals in headquarters, no bankers in offices, no ministers in government. Wars only scouts and sorcerers feel the approach. The most insightful. Gut. as if swallows - the approach of a catastrophic earthquake.

The grubby ragamuffin climbs higher and higher. He is one of those to whom the beginning of World War II war seems natural and inevitable, like an eclipse of the sun in a precisely calculated moment.

The international public, which is now having fun under palm trees on a wide terrace near "Vida's Dream", the approach of the war is not dreamed even in nightmarish Spanish dreams. These people are not up to war. They are busy. They are dancing. They are laughing. They drink soft drinks. And hot ones. They kiss. Today they have a carnival. From the black cellars the butlers roll oak barrels with precious wines. Huge brazier - right under the orchids. Bitter smoke over the paths creeps. A virtuoso cook is working on hot grates, shouting at the cooks. Well-trained waiters gliding among the guests with sparkling silver trays. Aroma flowers, perfume aroma, wine aroma. A quiet voice splashes like a mountain river. Everyone is waiting...

Today, here, in "Son Vida", there will be the most luxurious woman of the island, and perhaps the whole Spain - Senorita Anastasia de Streleza, Bird of Fire. The island loves this bird. The bird of fire carries island wealth and prosperity. The island only talks about her, rumors are ahead of her appearance: it is even known what Senorita Anastasia will be dressed up in today - she will appear in a robe oriental mistress. Here she is! On a magnificent stallion, in a saddle embroidered with gold - Persian mistress: from under a silk turban entwined with pearl threads, through transparent veil - a capricious squint. Behind her is a cavalcade of a shining retinue...

Where did you get such a horse? Spain knows a lot about horses. Such a handsome stallion only on pictures can be seen in books of fairy tales. Angry stallion like a devil. Dances. Beats with silver horseshoes. Sparks from under the hooves. This is a very special sound - a cavalcade for the granite pavement goes, and the chime of hooves spreads over the surrounding area with a charming melody. This a very special kind - the lady and the escort. This is a very special aroma - light smoke over a flood of flowers.

The arrogant Persian mistress smiles, her lips spread in a smile wider and wider, and together with her lips, her whole face, her whole head, spreads to the sides. Maybe it happened instantly, but Nastya the Firebird, dressed up as a ragamuffin boy, saw a tear in her head understudy girls in all details, as we see the action on the screen when the frames move

slowed down or even stopped by someone's hand.

The horse rushed, got furious. Somewhere far, far away in the clear sky rumbled. So in Spain

It happens. Sometimes. And they screamed and squealed around: "The Bird of Fire has been killed! The bird of fire has been killed!"

People did not understand: what happened? And the police didn't understand. And Nastya-ragged, on the ledge behind a piece of rock hidden, not everything is clear either. Only she has another misunderstanding. clear: not heavenly power struck, but the Kremlin. It is clear: a terrible weapon has been used - the Stalinist Argument. It is clear that in the whole world only one person can give permission to use such weapons. But, damn it, why? For what? What is her fault? Nastya Streletskaia conducted an undercover exit in such a way that like no one else did. Such an undercover exit will someday be written into the textbooks of espionage. A legalization! Its legalization cannot be assessed by any world standards. Its legalization is higher world standards by many orders of magnitude.

In a very short time, Nastya the Firebird deployed a recruiting base of amazing containers. Everything is ready for work. Recruit the most valuable agents in battalions, including advisers American President. In addition, an inexhaustible financial base has been created. scout like As usual, the Center is begging for money - who ever had enough of them? And Nastya to recruit for her hard-earned money ready, she can give the Center a lift, if necessary. Nastya the Firebird even further instructions went: she ensured her security almost in a Stalinist way, because security any organization or state begins with the security of the head. She's safe I invested a lot of money and a lot of cunning. She's not only a sorcerer's apprentice and apprentice tamer of sorcerers, she, moreover, is a student of the great Machiavelli. And the cunning Italian is a lot taught us centuries ago: "Only those security measures are good, reliable and effective, which depend on yourself and on your own abilities. Everyone for himself in this world building a security system. And he does not share his secrets with anyone, including his bodyguards. Following this testament, Nastya the Firebird created her own system of royal protection. She is so far not a queen, but made sure that the protection system was in place even before she announced his intention to restore the Spanish monarchy and to accept the heavy burden of power. Not alone the protection system was created by her, and several different systems to act simultaneously, complementing and reinforcing each other ... Among other things, the Firebird covered herself with what everyone covered themselves with great rulers: double. Find a thin girl in Paris or on the Cote d'Azur, for yourself similar is not a problem. It is necessary to pay for the risk of a double. It is quite inexpensive.

However, the concept of what is expensive and what is not, lately in the head of the Firebird, the meaning lost. More recently, even a small apartment in Paris, on Avenue Foch, seemed expensive, an apartment of only twenty-seven rooms and four halls on three floors, an apartment with six small balconies, with a modest garden and rooftop pool. Now it doesn't seem like that expensive apartment. An apartment is an apartment. A double is also inexpensive for someone who has

there is money to hire an understudy girl. To paint on a face - how much mind is needed? That's why there are makeup artists cinematic. It's quite good if the understudy girl goes to the masquerade, if her Persian dressed up: a turban on his head, a face covered with a veil, wrapped in a crimson cloak. Instruction: smile arrogantly, do not utter words ...

Nastya the Firebird did not think that her understudy under the Stalinist armor-piercing bullet substitutes. I didn't think that for some reason Stalin needed the life of the heiress of the Spanish throne. The Spanish throne Nastya Streletskaia has not yet taken, she has not yet claimed the throne, she didn't even openly call herself a Spanish infanta, because she believed that she had no enemies yet, because she thought she had no one to fear. Instead of herself, she exhibited a replacement for carnivals not because she was waiting for the assassination, not because she considered the assassination possible, she just didn't have time for masquerades, she needs to seize the press. How to rule crowds without the press? And the radio must be on a leash take. Under a warm roof.

Therefore, Nastya is busy with business, and instead of herself, she exposes a double to the masquerades. This is also development of elements of the future security system. At the same time and a joke: will they guess that on a raven stallion may appear not very real señorita Anastasia?

Nastya sent an understudy girl to the carnival instead of herself. Left alone. And suddenly called her someone's inaudible gentle voice. And suddenly, with someone else's knowledge, the Firebird realized that she she herself should be there too - at the carnival, in the valley of billionaires, on top of a mountain, in a shady garden at "Son Vida".

There, her fate must be decided. There awaits her death. There will be killings now. beckoned Nastya death with sweet sadness: come to me! Pulled Nastya to death with that irresistible craving, which for millions of years in a row throws schools of noble salmon into the upper reaches of wild rapids rivers that drives males and females to hellish labor against roaring waterfalls, through thousands dangers - to death! Nastya was startled. I dressed quickly. Dressed as a ragged boy. Not in a skirt to break through cordons and ambushes to your death!

She had an invitation to the carnival. But she gave her invitation to the understudy girl. Fake a new invitation - no time. Need to hurry. Death does not wait. That's why I went through cordons. How they taught. Anyone who has learned to walk unnoticed through Stalin's Moscow, through any other cities and countries can walk. Without looking back. Passed, broke, broke off. Sorry, u guards are not German shepherds, but ferocious Rottweilers, black with a red edging on the chest and in undertail. When a Rottweiler is nearby, especially a bitch, Nastya cannot work. For some reason. Because from Rottweilers, she had to leave not as a student of a sorcerer, enthralling the chase, but as an ordinary saboteur leaves - through the water, through the thickets and cutting sedge. And again through swamp and mud. The heart is beating. The difference in principle is not great: the despicable are chasing you capitalist dogs or our own communist dogs. One hell of a scary...

She broke away from the dogs, but she knows: not for long. The valley of billionaires is small in size, and the entrance to she is alone, because everyone is now raised to their feet to look for a ragamuffin, who is not clear how to go to the valley penetrated. Someone else's knowledge told the Firebird that the real danger is not behind, but there, in front, on top, on the terrace near "Son Vida". That is where death awaits. That's where she rushed.

Her sorcerer taught her not to wait for a meeting with trouble, not to hide from fate, but to go forward danger. Not turning. Why this should be done, the sorcerer did not explain. Perhaps he himself knew why. It's just that life told him so: if five are waiting ahead, with a cudgel, and behind only two cut off the path, go to those who are stronger. For five. The sorcerer Nastya taught this. And she went into trouble. Up. Up. Up.

Nastya climbs the slope among the rocks and thorns, and along the serpentine road on a black a stallion with araps and a retinue solemnly and sedately the twin girl rises to the top. Also to death. It is interesting to Nastya the Firebird: they will kill one of her or the same twin girl fate prepared?

Nastya climbed to the top. Pulled up on her hands. Because of a rock fragment, from a thicket of roses appreciated the masquerade. Still, people live beautifully. What outfits! What a shine! How much diamonds on people! It was then that the purple Negroes entered the terrace under the palm trees. That's where it broke armor-piercing bullet duplicating the head ...

This is what is not clear. Nastya the Firebird herself walked towards her fate. But fate passed by like the fist of Rodrigo the magnificent. And it is not fate that beats, but Comrade Stalin ...

For what? For what?

However, for a long time the question did not torment: why? You never know why Comrade Stalin decided to kill her? Why does he kill his own people? Yes, you have a great life! Kills - so it is necessary. Reason not important. Another thing is important: what to do next?

If there are miracles, if she breaks out of here, then what? Then waiting for her second shot out the damn thing called SA. If Comrade Stalin ordered, then his guys are up to the end bring. There is no reason to doubt here. What then to do? Return to Moscow and ask a friend Stalin to reconsider the case? It may turn out that they tried to kill her by mistake. Someone something is not understood in her actions... It happens.

You can do the same, but do not ask for a review, come to Stalin: your unfortunate shooters they killed an understudy, but if there are complaints, here I am, kill ...

It is possible, however, not to return to Moscow. She is now listed as dead in Moscow, and no one will never seek. Moreover, the war is coming soon. World War II. Not until the Firebird will be. Because maybe Nastya just disappear. Without a trace. It's good to be listed as dead, then no one will take you anywhere waiting and not looking. South America is huge and beautiful. Get lost in the luxurious quarters of the capital Argentina or the capital of Brazil... Change your appearance quite a bit... Obtain passports and

Nastya is trained to make legends ... Yes, even without a legend they will give her a passport of any country: the rich are everywhere love... In addition, she now knows how to get money in unlimited quantities.

You can still run away from here and paint a picture of "The Third World War" - three red the stripes are crossed out with three black ones. For this, big money and deafening fame await her: more The Second World War did not start, but she already has the Third one depicted! If you strain your imagination, collect spiritual strength and overflow with inspiration, then you can try the Fourth World War imagine in all its horror and portray on canvas. Is it possible to secretly transfer an officer regiment to America and start a big business of collecting debts...

However, why is this? She already has so much money that it will be enough for a lifetime, no matter how much you spend it ... Unless, of course, it will fall out of here.

There is another possibility ... Now the rumor of a mysterious murder will scatter instantly throughout country. The bird of fire is a famous man in the Balearic Islands and throughout Spain. And in France. So: if you somehow get out of here, then you can then resurrect! Not right away. Forty days... In Spain they will appreciate it.

Appreciated, certainly appreciated. But the fingers are numb. Nastya clung to the crack, on that she rests. You won't last long - the fingers turn blue, they lose their sensitivity. And on the hands - pain. It hurts from pain. From pain - visions in the head. Thoughts are fragments, thoughts do not continue one another. Shiver off fingers - on the arms to the shoulders and chest. You can unclench them a little... Fingers. Then there will be no more problems in life. Then there will be no painful choice... Unclench your fingers and you will fly like a bird over an abyss. She's a bird. Or how?

For some reason, the thought of the Dragon flashed through my mind. I wonder which is stronger: love or death?

Sasha Dragon, where are you? Why don't you save the Firebird that hangs on the edge of the cliff? You, apparently, now you are instructing the girls from the French group somewhere. You, Dragon, probably perfecting their art of kissing. You are a great instructor...

Icy jealousy overwhelmed Nastya and burned her. Jealousy - as the Dragon himself taught her - is the most strongest of all our feelings. Jealousy leads both to death and to life. The greatest thing created humanity over thousands of years of its bloody history, was created in outbursts of jealousy.

Because... You have to do something to spite the Dragon... You can die to spite him. It's a pity he talks about it won't know. He thinks that her head has already been smashed to smithereens by an armor-piercing bullet on orders comrade Stalin. Therefore, the Dragon will never know that she fell into the abyss to spite him.

Therefore, there is no need to die. It is necessary for him to survive.

Our fate is in our hands. Each of us is given a moment in life when we need to make our own choice. Life depends on this choice, and maybe something more. The moment of choice is coming suddenly, and the decision must be made without much hesitation. Such a moment happened to Nastya Firebird.

She went to her death, and found herself at the scene of the crime, at the scene of the murder of her understudy, over an abyss, on the edge of a cliff.

Directly above it are the sparkling boots of a guard, who vigilantly surveys the approaches to the "Dream Vide". The guard is ready to slash at any bush if he moves.

Beneath it are red-hot gray ledges braided with prickly thorns, even lower - furious guards and ferocious dogs that prowl around, who can not wait for her tear apart. The Firebird appeared between heaven and earth: in front and above - security, behind and below - chase.

And before her the choice is wide, like the sky over the Mediterranean Sea.

Down into the valley to go down? Will not work. There they are looking for a ragamuffin grimy, there her dogs tear apart.

Maybe here, on a rock, wait until night? Don't stay here long. She's on the edge of the ledge stands, the feet do not fit completely on the ledge. It is held only by fingers, the tips of the very - for crack...

Therefore, the third option: just pull yourself up on your hands like a worker-peasant and find yourself straight on the terrace in a crush and panic, in the midst of general confusion and misunderstanding, among hysterical screams and senseless hustle and bustle. The move is good, but you can get an automatic burst in the head even before how the guard will be interested in your name. The guards are now painfully nervous. It's good when you hit in the face - you can dodge. It's good when you break your head with a fireman's ax strive, again - dodge. And dodge the automatic burst. But if you don't get ten bullets between the eyes, then and then the appearance of a dirty, tattered Firebird, a boy dressed up, next to a headless double - not the best solution. This will surely be interpreted wrong. The rumor about the murder of a double will fly around the island and all of Spain, and who knows how the crowd will understand her appearance at the scene of the murder ... Who knows how popular rumor will distort and distort incomprehensible to her matches.

No, there is no way up. Choose, Firebird: you can't go down, you can't go up and stay in place also not possible.

And she chose...

The moments of weakness are over. She felt bold and strong. She first realized not an ugly duckling or even a fluffy dog with blue eyes, but a flexible, proud a predator, a charming villainess, a female jaguar, not yet fully matured, but already tasted the taste of warm blood, the taste of power. And not even that. She is not a feline predator. What maybe a cat? A cat can climb a telegraph pole. And the man? Man is capable of more. Each of us is capable of the impossible. You just need to believe in yourself. fate gives each exactly as much as he asks her. You just have to believe in your lucky star, and

she will carry you out of any trouble, lift you to any heights. To those heights that you wish, to those heights that you demand from your fate.

Nastya felt like a real Firebird: graceful, bold, indomitable, free and free in deeds and thoughts. So, down or up?

Up! Only up! Facing danger. Under the machine gun! She is a sorcerer's apprentice a student of the lord of sorcerers, their brilliant tamer. She has never used it yet. what she was taught in the difficult lessons of miracles.

The hour has struck. Up!

And then?

After...

Why not become a real sovereign? Mistress of millions. Covert or overt. Better a secret.

Like everything in life, it's that simple.

Just believe in yourself.

Only want.

A pebble slipped out from under the boot and rolled down, clinking and dragging others with it. stones. The guard above her squealed wildly and pulled the bolt of his machine gun...

Viktor Suvorov about his books and about himself

I was lucky to be born in the Far East in 1947. Childhood passed in the distant and very even distant garrisons - Barabash, Yanchikha, Slavyanka, again Barabash, Ryazanovka ... And everything was there, what a person needs for complete happiness: self-propelled guns SU-76 and SU-100, anti-aircraft guns 52-K, armored personnel carriers BTR-40, BTR-152 and even BTR-50P, M-30 and D-1 howitzers, artillery tractors, PT-76 tanks and many, many other things, including abandoned fortified areas around coast of the Pacific Ocean.

There was a division in Barabash, and also in Slavyanka, because the schools there were large, and in We had one teacher in Ryazanovka for all four classes. She was also the principal of the school, and cleaning lady. Both the first and second classes sat in the same room; then, on the second shift, in the same room - the third and fourth. Five or six children in each class. The teacher led half lesson with the first class, the second half of the lesson with the second, and after lunch the first half of the lesson - with the third class, the second - with the fourth.

In September 1957, after 12 years of service in the Far East, my father was transferred to the Kiev military district. In Konotop, we lived on Garmatnaya Street, that is, on Cannon or Artillery Street, if translated into Russian. I studied at school number 8. The first four classes are five different schools. When we were leaving Ryazanovka, the teacher tore a piece of paper out of her notebook and wrote a note: "Volodya Rezun received excellent marks for September in such and such subjects ..." She has a seal, clear case, it wasn't. Purely specifically: Filkin's diploma. And then the father at the headquarters assured this document seal of the 72nd Guards Port Arthur Order of Alexander Nevsky Mortar Regiment.

In August 1958 I entered the Voronezh Suvorov Military School. Suvorov The schools were created by order of Comrade Stalin in 1943. Under him, these schools were 15. In addition - two Suvorov schools of the NKVD. Those did not have scarlet shoulder straps, buttonholes and stripes, but blue. They were called "Arakcheevs". After Stalin, in the system of the Ministry of Defense was created two more IEDs: Leningrad and Minsk. The organization of all Suvorov military schools was established personally by Comrade Stalin: the head of the school is a major general, he has three deputy colonel: first deputy, head of the educational department and head of the political department. Each school has seven companies. Company commanders are lieutenant colonels, platoon commanders are majors. There were no ensigns then, there were re-enlisted men. In each company - foreman of the company, in each platoon - Deputy Platoon Leader. That is, in each company there are four re-enlisted or warrant officers, if translated into modern terms.

In a platoon - 25 Suvorovites, in a company - 75, in a school - 525. However, they were expelled from there mercilessly. After the first year, a small additional set was usually made. After that

the unfit were expelled, but there was no new set, so there was a shortage in the schools, which in each company increased as graduation approached.

During my training, the head of the Vzh SVU was Colonel Ivanov, then Major General Dudorov. The company commander was Lieutenant Colonel Merkulov, then Lieutenant Colonel Istomin. The platoon commanders were successively Major Fedorov, Captain Dementiev, Major Stepansky, Major Panferov. The foreman of the company all the years was the foreman of extra-long service Chernykh, deputy platoon commander - foreman of extra-long service Uskov.

The military camp in which the school was located was built under Alexander the Third especially for the penal battalion. The buildings are two-story, brick, built to last. IN in the center - a powerful building, on the ground floor of which there are several dozen solitary cells, under the ceiling - prison windows with bars and iron shutters.

In our time, these cells housed the warehouses of the school, from weapons to clothing and food - there were a lot of cameras. And on the second floor there were huge halls. In my time there housed a grandiose library and reading room. The library was not only grandiose, but luxurious.

During the war, the Germans were on the right side of the river - where the city lies - and on the left they were not allowed to side. It was a suburb, its name is Privada. Here on the pridacha they were located those same barracks. Before the start of the fighting - and they were as cruel in Voronezh as in Stalingrad - the city library was taken to the indestructible barracks.

Until 1917, Voronezh was a merchant, industrial city, and even earlier, Peter the Great here he built a fleet for access to the Azov and Black Seas. The city library was full of books XIX century. The city was literally wiped off the face of the earth during the war, and the barracks on Pridach survived, and only some of the buildings left traces of shrapnel.

After the war, the city had no time for the library - there was nowhere to place it anyway, so it and remained in our school. In the main book depository, of course, no one was allowed in, books they were not given to anyone. The exception was those individual not quite normal book lovers, who on Sundays came voluntarily to disassemble, sort, arrange, make catalogues. The work progressed slowly, but no one was in a hurry. After almost two decades of war have passed, and the work has not yet been completed. What's up with that treasure later, I don't know. But I suspect that the city authorities simply forgot about where they sent library during the war. Nobody mentioned it to them.

Around the building with solitary cells and the library is an impenetrable rectangle all other buildings were standing: headquarters, barracks, educational buildings, a canteen, two gyms, a medical unit, bath and all. In all other buildings the windows were normal, high and wide, but in each window opening stuck out pieces of powerful steel bars from the bars, which they sawed out,

turning the town of the penal battalion into a place of training for the rising military generation.

The auditorium was arranged in a spacious and high battalion church, which was demolished a bell tower, and a stage was erected in place of the altar.

The routine was strict and clear: getting up at 7:00, exercising, toilet, morning inspection, breakfast, six hours of classes, lunch, two hours of free time, two hours of mandatory self-study. dinner, an hour of optional self-study (you can teach lessons, or you can read a book), an evening walk (that is, we line up with songs), an evening verification and lights out.

At the age of 13, I wrote my first novel, about a mechanical cat that was used in intelligence and terrorist purposes. It's a long time, but sometimes the devils sideways with a pitchfork scratch: but not to restore the text? After all, it was fun.

They taught us well and according to a special program. In ordinary schools - ten classes, in SVU - eleven. Exams were taken at the end of each academic year. After the exams - camps, where preparations continued. When they grew up, every summer - an internship in the troops: a soldier's uniform, only the boots are not tarpaulin, but bare, officer's. The order of the internship is army, with getting up at 6:00 and combat training without concessions and simplifications.

And my whistleblowers convict: at the age of 11 he entered the Suvorov School! That's corruption! Here it is, damn!

For greater persuasiveness, the whistleblowers should have been informed: he entered at the age of 11, and everyone else is at what age ... But for some reason, the whistleblowers did not specify.

For if it were reported that the rest were 15-16 years old, then there would be an ambiguity: what I did one among these foreheads? Did they teach me according to a special program or what? And when those foreheads released and sent to higher military schools, what happened to me? Left to repeat the course?

So, citizens, everyone was accepted at the age of 11. So back in 1943, a comrade established Stalin. The first company was the youngest. The next year, she was assigned the next ascending number: the company became the second, a year later - the third, and so on. The sixth company is pre-graduation, seventh - graduation. We were enrolled in the first company after the fourth grade at the age of 11. When we were 12 years old, the company became the second, and when 17 - the seventh. At the age of 18, they graduated from college.

The Cadet Brotherhood lived in an atmosphere of some kind of internal nobility, and I would even say - aristocracy. Scoundrels and scoundrels did not survive in that atmosphere. Our cadets from St. Petersburg to Ussuriysk differed from all others. I came to school in the morning and then went home. IN children's correctional institutions, some come for a short time, others for a long time; new friends and enemies appear, old ones leave. And from the first day we were pressed for seven years into one family. And from the first day, the cadets from the senior companies explained the rules of cadet behavior and stubbornly planted them. Squealing and any other abominations were mercilessly punished. misdemeanor, perfect in the first year, always remembered. Those who did not fit into the team left on their own. Togo,

who could not withstand the load, expelled.

There were eight people in my department when I entered.

After the first year of study, Zhenya Maslov was expelled, and Vanya Sarkhoshyan was added. After the second year they expelled Volodya Solopov. After the third, Vitya Shilov was transferred to the Kiev SVU, Sasha Slukin was expelled for health reasons. After the fourth year, Kostya Barashkin and Vanya were expelled Sarkhoshyan. After the sixth year - Volodya Lifshits. Only two people made it to graduation - me and Sasha Yurin. Sash, Hello!

We must admit that our case is not standard. But in general, the picture was as follows: they scored 75 people in the company, a year later they added 10, after seven years they released 49 people.

In 1963, the Voronezh SVU was disbanded. I was transferred to the Kalinin SVU, which I graduated in the summer of 1965.

And again, the whistleblowers rejoice: it was arranged for him by pull ...

Let's puzzle the whistleblowers with the question: if I was transferred to another school through connections, then what happened to my comrades?

Let's dispel the fog: in 1960, Nikita Khrushchev hit the army. She was cut by a million two hundred thousand people. The reorganization also affected the Suvorov schools. The term of study was decided reduced from seven years to three. But if the term is reduced, then in the same barracks and educational buildings you can train twice as many future officers. Consequently, the number of Suvorov schools can be shortened. There were 17 of them in the system of the Ministry of Defense, it was decided to leave 9. Reorganization spent wisely. In 1960, admission to all Suvorov military was stopped for three years. schools. Therefore, in the fall of that year, six companies remained in all schools. There were no first mouths - they were not recruited. Free barracks and educational buildings appeared in each school. In the same The Saratov SVU was disbanded. Six of his companies were sent to other schools. At this company was not torn apart, the established teams were not broken.

The following year, in all Suvorov schools, not only the first ones, but even second mouth. And three schools were disbanded: Orenburg, Tula and Tambov. In our Voronezh SVU arrived two companies from Tula. We do not have the first and second companies, but we have two sixths and two sevenths.

In 1962, there were no third companies in all schools. In that year, the same order was Novochoerkassk and Stavropol schools were disbanded.

In 1963, it was our turn. The three remaining companies of the Voronezh Suvorovites were transferred to Kalinin. In the same year, admission resumed. But now they were already taking at the age of 15. We are these The guys were called "Kutuzovites". They were glorious and correct, but from our point of view, in something was forever and irretrievably lost to the system of Suvorov schools.

In 1964, the Kuibyshev SVU was disbanded. In the same year, the company numbering system

changed. Now the company number did not reflect your seniority. He did not reflect anything - just a number. We, without bending, went from the first to the sixth inclusive, but instead of the most coveted and honorable the seventh company suddenly fell into the fourth. Imagine that in an ordinary school, the tenth grade suddenly would call the sixth or fifth.

During my training, Major General Kostrov, the commander of my company - Lieutenant Colonel Prokhozhaev, platoon commander - Major Toporkov, foreman of the company - foreman of extra-long service Alferov, deputy platoon commander - senior sergeant Maslov.

We will assume that I was transferred to the Kalinin SVU due to blasphemy, but so that it would not be boring, along with me, three more companies of my comrades were transferred through the same "pull". And in just five years reorganization "through connections" moved 2410 Suvorov students from eight disbanded schools to nine remaining.

I don't know if there were once bad commanders or bad commanders in the Suvorov schools teachers. I haven't seen anyone like this in seven years. And cadet scarlet shoulder straps with the letters "KI SVU" I keep to this day.

After SVU, I entered the second year of the Kyiv Higher Combined Arms Command twice Red Banner School named after Frunze - he had just been transferred from Odessa to Kyiv. The history is here. There were many military schools in Kyiv. Among them is one with a very modest in the name of KKTU - Kiev Command and Technical School. There wasn't even a word in the title. "military". But if the school is command, then it is clear that it is not civilian. Cadets wore tank emblems, the school was commanded by Major General of Artillery Mukhachev. And they cooked there officers of the Strategic Missile Forces for service in units and formations, armed with 8K63, 8K64 and 8K65 products, i.e. strategic missiles of medium and intercontinental range. Comrade Khrushchev focused on missiles and deployed a powerful system for training command, engineering and technical personnel, but it soon became clear what the number of officers is not necessary for the Strategic Missile Forces. In 1965 KKTU produced the last issue of "tankers" and was closed.

And at this time, the Odessa Higher Combined Arms Command School became crowded in home walls. It became crowded because, in addition to Soviet officers, fighters were trained there national liberation movements. Now the whole world is fighting international terrorism. But before international terrorism could be fought, it had to be created. Here it is created in the Soviet Union by the efforts of various organizations and departments. to this important matter the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff (IRU GSh) also had a hand in it. The idea was simple: to rouse the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to fight the capitalists before all with the American ones. Then the Americans took up this very important issue and

British. The idea was also very simple: to raise the Muslims against the Soviet Union.

And they were raised - fed, watered, taught, supplied with weapons and money, transferred to

Afghanistan...

Now, together, we are successfully fighting this universal evil. But it started the spread of this infection from our country.

At that time, there were seven higher combined arms command schools. They all had their features, bias. Odessa VOKU differed from the rest in that it was under secret control of the GRU. People from the GRU, without drawing attention to themselves, looked closely at cadets in order to place some graduates in the future on all floors of the military intelligence. Neither the cadets, nor the commanders of the lower and middle levels were supposed to know about this. Most of the graduates continued to serve in motorized rifle and tank units and units, having nothing to do with military intelligence.

At the same time, the GRU trained in the Odessa VOKU fighters of national liberation movements, or, more simply, terrorists from Asia, Africa and Latin America. For them was special faculty. By the mid-60s, there were so many of these wrestlers that one faculty was no longer enough. Yes, and the contact of Soviet cadets with brothers in the class struggle was undesirable. Because it was decided to give the "brothers" the entire school, and transfer the Soviet cadets somewhere else place. Where to? Yes, here in Kyiv, a place has been vacated! So the Odessa Higher Combined Arms command school in the summer of 1965 became Kyiv, located in the town, which released after the dissolution of the KKTU. Arrived from

Odessa cadets were not at all happy with this turn of fate. They wrote on the walls: "Better Odessa with gonorrhea than Kyiv with chestnuts.

At that very moment, in August 1965, I entered the Kiev VOKU. They prepared seriously. Graduated with honors. He freed Czechoslovakia from the pernicious and pernicious influence of capitalism. Upon his return, he was assigned to the 145th Guards Budapest Order of Suvorov and Bohdan Khmelnytsky training motorized rifle regiment of the 66th Guards Poltava Red Banner Division of the Carpathian Military District. Appointment to the training division was in our time for promotion and promotion. In the linear parts of the platoon ceiling - starley, company — captain. In training units, a platoon commander is a captain, a company commander is a major. And official salaries training units and connections were higher. My regiment was called a motorized rifle regiment, but it prepared sergeants for reconnaissance units and units of motorized rifle and tank divisions Carpathian military district and two groups of troops, Central and Southern, that is, for the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

The preparations were, to put it mildly, ferocious. At that time, the main task of intelligence subunits and units in battle was the search for and destruction of enemy nuclear weapons and their means

delivery. Reconnaissance units, having discovered a nuclear mine behind enemy lines, missile battery or 203-mm self-propelled howitzer, were obliged to report this to the headquarters and attack, whatever their chances of success. Our probable (and improbable) opponents understood this, therefore, already in peacetime, they took measures to protect and defend especially important objects. The Soviet Army responded to this by strengthening reconnaissance units. Previously the main striking force of the reconnaissance battalions of motorized rifle and tank divisions were amphibious tanks PT-76. With me, they were replaced by T-55 and T-64.

Service in training did not seem like honey. Training division at any time on alert turned into combat. There were enough worries. Therefore, we all had, as it were, two services at once in one time: both the training of sergeants, and the preservation of the mobilization readiness of the formation. But this Not all. After the division left on alert, the second set of weapons remained in place, combat equipment, transport, ammunition and the so-called "core" (that is, a group of officers) to receive reservists and deployment of the division of the second formation. During my service I had to to visit both in the first composition and in the "core".

I quickly became convinced that our native government in vain does not pay money to anyone with military ranks does not spoil for free. The service was complicated not least by the lack of command personnel. From divisions constantly took officers on long trips abroad - to Cuba, to Egypt, to Syria, to Vietnam, and God knows where else. But there was an order from the Minister of Defense: the positions of those who had gone to Do not take long business trips. Positions remained vacant, but work for those who left someone had to do it. In my battalion, for example, there was no chief of staff - he fought in Africa, and they couldn't send a new mess for this. Because the commander of the first company temporarily (three years) performed his duties. But if there is no company commander in place, the commander of the first platoon worked for him. And there was no head of intelligence in the regiment. For the same reason. Because one company commander carried it out responsibilities...

The training course for sergeants is six months. Recruits were received in trains and after six months, assigning badges by order of the division commander, they were sent to the troops. Passed the exams - junior sergeant, passed "excellent" - sergeant. Prepared scouts essentially for suicidal actions, but the death of reconnaissance groups ensured the survival main forces.

In the 66th Guards Training Motorized Rifle Division, I made four excellent graduations. The next rung of the career ladder is the intelligence department of the headquarters of the Volga military districts. Kuibyshev was the secret reserve capital of the Soviet Union. District headquarters - on the coast Volga, and behind it a grandiose square. They say one of the largest in Europe, if not in the world that square, as we all now know, was the secret command post of Comrade Stalin, in compared with which the command posts of Hitler and Churchill do not look very solid and not

seriously.

By the way, about Churchill. Let's hear how the British pronounce this name. In my opinion, in this name sounds "yo". In vain we forget this letter, in vain we throw it out of the language. Our language is depleted in recent decades. And in this letter there is so much softness and tenderness, which is not so enough for our hardened souls.

And if we are already talking about this beautiful letter, then let's think about why our good people strive all the time to dot the "i", which do not need to be dotted at all. AND why is our people not in a hurry to dot the "e"? Except as the properties of the mysterious Russian souls some things I can not explain.

But back to the spare capital.

Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the role of Kuibyshev as the secret reserve capital of the country was preserved. Therefore, the headquarters of the Volga Military District secretly carried an additional load - in the event of an aggravation of the international situation, reserve command posts were deployed here Headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and the General Staff, as well as a strategic communications center. IN corridor of the intelligence department of the headquarters of the Volga military district, fate pushed me the one I mentioned in Aquarium in just one line - with a ringing girl from the group control.

After a year of service in this headquarters - three years of the Military Diplomatic Academy of the Soviet Army, four years of work in undercover production and leaving.

Whistleblowers are looking for — and finding — inconsistencies in the biographies of Viktor Suvorov and Vladimir Rezun.

You are trying in vain, citizens - there should not have been any correspondence. If I named exactly names, places and dates, it would be meanness towards my comrades, colleagues and commanders. Therefore, I shifted the narrative in place and time, changed the names. In my books I quite consciously worked "for a fall".

In "The Liberator" and "Aquarium" Viktor Suvorov is a collective-farm driver who is in the market trades in watermelons and poisons the Dnieper with poisonous abomination, and Vladimir Rezun was trained in special military schools.

Viktor Suvorov entered the first year of the Kharkov Guards Tank Command school, and Vladimir Rezun - immediately to the second year of the Kyiv Higher Combined Arms Command Twice Red Banner School named after Frunze.

Viktor Suvorov served at the headquarters of the Carpathian Military District, and Vladimir Rezun at the headquarters Privolzhsky, in the secret reserve capital of the Soviet Union.

Viktor Suvorov got into the nomenclature of the Central Committee as a senior lieutenant, and quick Rezun - still a lieutenant, breaking all records.

In "Aquarium" I mentioned in one line about the sonorous girl from the control group, but in life Rezun's case was not limited to this.

All graduates of the First Faculty of the Military Diplomatic Academy are also entitled to at least one year of training in different departments of the GRU. Viktor Suvorov also passed that year, and in real life, I got to combat work abroad the very first of the entire issue, bypassing this year of additional training.

Viktor Suvorov worked in Vienna, the second most important center of world espionage, and Rezun - in Geneva, in the first center, in its main capital.

In the "Aquarium" I have one Navigator, and in real life three residents have changed: two smart, the third - not very. When, a few years after all that had happened, this third one died, no one from the GRU came to bury him, although he was a major general. Everyone hated him fiercely - and bosses and subordinates. He earned striped pants only because his brother was assistant to Comrade Brezhnev. This smart guy in general's pants grew up in high offices Moscow, and his first position abroad, the highest of all possible, is the GRU resident in Geneva. He failed everything that could be failed. I didn't ruin my book with his image.

And he never explained the real reasons for leaving.

Viktor Suvorov fled alone and from Austria, Vladimir Rezun - with his wife and small children and from Switzerland.

What am I to? To the fact that both "Tales of the Liberator" and "Aquarium" were written and published during the time of comrades Brezhnev and Andropov, when the union of the indestructible republics free was great and mighty, when few believed that he would soon be gone. "Aquarium" is not about me, not about my adventures, but about how military intelligence works from the battalion and above, to the very important residencies. And I had two ways.

First: call everyone with whom it fell to serve by name, and break many destinies.

Second: change all names, starting with your own, move the action in time and space. He showed particular caution when it came to agents. Please note after when I left, there was not a single spy process. Nobody was arrested or convicted.

Maybe he didn't work well and didn't know anything?

Someone who does not work well in strategic undercover intelligence is expelled after the first year. I served the full term of the business trip, all three years. As an exception, was left on the fourth year, as a special exception - on the fifth.

In order not to cause inconvenience to anyone, he introduced himself by a false name and decided to never do not disclose. I was first discovered by the head of the GRU, Colonel-General E.L. Timokhin:

The pseudonym "Suvorov" was taken by former Major Rezun Vladimir Bogdanovich ("Red Star", April 29, 1992).

And now the critics reproach me: I should have turned in everyone I knew! Everyone should have to call by real names, to precisely link the action to the place and time, so that it is easy calculate not only those who were nearby, but also those who are far away!

And it was necessary to reveal the appearances, names, passwords! Particularly detailed and vividly befitted a foreign highlight the agents so that everyone is tied up and imprisoned!

Thank you for your advice, dear comrades. But in this life I only go the way I chose myself.

Now about the main thing.

What is the most important thing for me?

The main thing is "Icebreaker".

In the Soviet Union, the study of the Great Patriotic War was banned and persecuted. Sincere songs about the war to sing - this is please. Blind an ugly woman in Stalingrad - money no pity. And the fact that in a couple of decades the concrete will crack and the statue on the man-made mound it would inevitably lean and sag—it didn't bother anyone. Let's budget now, and problems let future generations decide. So: our native state erected cyclopean idols on mounds, did not spare money for that, in order to spur patriotism (and cut the budget), but to access to the archives of the war years was tightly closed. This is what got my attention. The war seems to be Great, like, and Patriotic, but only it is not recommended to delve into the details. something there hide. Interesting, what exactly?

I'm sitting at the academy at a lecture, the hardened wolf of undercover production explains to me what the scout must look for signs in order to determine whether the adversary is preparing an attack or not. Among these signs: the enemy is pulling headquarters and command posts, communication centers and strategic stocks of fuel, ammunition and engineering equipment, deploys airfield network ... And the next lecture is given by another colonel about our flagrant stupidity in 1941 of the year: Stalin's generals and marshals, who did not understand anything, pulled up headquarters to the border and command posts, communication centers and strategic stocks of fuel, ammunition and engineering property, deployed an airfield network. At the same time, 254 were built in the western regions of the country airfield! Yes, with concrete strips! They brought there fuel, food, bombs, dugouts dug up, set up tents, the Germans came to everything ready: tons of potatoes in warehouses, cabbage in barrels, bandages in the medical unit, even Soviet bombs fit the Germans, one plane damn, what bombs are hung under him. If there were no these airfields, there would be no German pilots such expanse in our sky, especially in mud.

And we all laughed at the stupidity of Comrade Stalin and his generals. Above us so far the whole world is laughing. And you don't have to laugh. Those airfields were not prepared for Hitler and his aces, but for sudden attack on Hitler. And there is nothing shameful in that.

It's Hitler!

You do not need seven spans in your forehead to figure out: Stalin was preparing an attack. And having understood this, you can take any aspect of preparing a country for war, and we will see with the naked eye proof of this simple assumption. Here they were prepared in peacetime partisan detachments - they were dispersed right before the war. Why? Yes, because they were preparing fight on foreign territory. Prepared an incredible number of paratroopers, who in defensive war is not needed at all. For what? Yes, all the same.

I did not consider many issues in my books - the topic is inexhaustible. But take any incomprehensible question, and the Icebreaker, like a golden key, will open the answer to you.

But they tell me: in real science, they act differently - they collect facts, analyze them, then draw conclusions. And you have the opposite: first you made a conclusion, and then you click this conclusion as nuts any facts. This is not a scientific approach!

This is not really a scientific approach. This is a reconnaissance approach - to truncate some small strangeness, some kind of trifle. Here is a broken branch on the path. Why would suddenly? Find this strange) fact explanation, and only then everything else will become clear. By the way, not only intelligence works. Have you read books about Sherlock Holmes? Here! This same Holmes is also attention turned to some strange specks, blades of grass and specks, found logic in things at first illogical look, and then all the other facts became clear.

A military intelligence analyst works as an investigator. No one to reveal the logic of events to him will not be. That is his job to find this logic. And safes in front of the scout no one will open up. By the way, and before the historian - too. Therefore, the historian and intelligence officer - related professions. Their task is to penetrate the vaults of secrets. And if it doesn't go to the papers get access, then it remains only to figure out those secrets that are hidden in safes and vaults. Comprehension of the mysteries of history is exploration of the past. And the historian does not need courage less. He risks his life, like a scout: after all, they can tear off his head. Or something else.

But, if you delve deeper, you will have to agree: there are an innumerable number of methods in science. The main thing is that they bring us closer to the truth. Here is an example: a researcher found a bone of an unknown antediluvian beast, figured out which part of the skeleton this bone belongs to, which bones should be with it side by side, what shape, what size they should be. With only one bone in front of you, man restored the entire skeleton from thousands of missing bones. He "calculated" them! In a hundred years almost a whole skeleton of the same dinosaur was found, compared with a century-old reconstruction, marveled at the accuracy, took off their hats as a token of respect. This is what real science is.

They tell me: you write about the war, but where are the supporting documents?

I answer: dinosaurs did not leave any documents behind them. Only bones. Is this enough to doubt their existence? Here's a closer example. US President John

Kennedy was assassinated. Someone planned the murder. But where is the document? There is no document. Does it follow from this that the murder was committed without any preparation?

"Icebreaker" I sat down to write the very first night after leaving. I thought I would fit into one article. I wrote it, but realized that in order to understand it, two more explanatory articles had to be written, and for them understanding - four more. Articles multiplied, turning into chapters, but it was necessary for something live. It was necessary, without stopping work on the main theme, to bring another to the fore. Behind a few months wrote "Tales of the Liberator". For this, it was not necessary to draw up card files, re-collect information about divisions and corps, about generals and marshals, re-read books adolescence and youth.

"Tales of the Liberator" - about how I was a cadet, how I sat in the guardhouse, how I cleaned general toilets,

became an officer, as he liberated a fraternal country that strove to turn off the right path.

Find a literary agent, publisher, translator, proofread translation, edit, everything it takes time, patience and nerves. The book was published only in 1981. The publisher insisted to be published under my real name.

In this case, the book is guaranteed to become a bestseller. There were all conditions for this: neutral Switzerland disappeared Soviet diplomat Vladimir Rezun with his wife and two children.

A diplomat is not a private person, but an official representative of his country. disappearance a diplomat of any rank is a sensation. The Cold War is in full swing. Two superpowers confront each other around the world from Cuba and Chile to Egypt and Syria, from Indonesia and Vietnam to Czechoslovakia and Germany. At any time, an exacerbation with unpredictable outcome for all mankind. This has happened more than once. And negotiations on nuclear charges and their means of delivery, about submarines and missile defense, about tanks and guns go to Geneva, within the walls of the Permanent Mission of the USSR to the UN Office.

And now, not just a diplomat from some embassy, but a diplomat from this very Permanent Mission of the USSR. And the Foreign Office* declares that the fugitive diplomat has been granted asylum in the UK. Radio, television, the press are impatient and ready: here are the first strips of newspapers, here are magazine covers for photographs, here is airtime in news bulletins. But the fugitive is silent. In the press - the most incredible version of what happened. Everyone is looking for an explanation why there are no public speeches with denunciations and revelations. They speculate that diplomacy for Rezun was only a cover for some secret activity. It's even more interesting. Even a timid version appeared in the press: is he from the GRU? There are many defectors from the KGB.

And the last time a person escaped from the GRU was 32 years ago, in 1946. In addition, from the GRU was Colonel Penkovsky. But he didn't run away. If this one is from the GRU, then ... Publishers contact the Foreign Office

* Foreign Office - British Foreign Office.

- here are the contracts, ready to buy a book if he decides to write it. We pay now, we pay richly
it doesn't matter what will be in that book, the main thing is sooner, and that the author's name should be on the cover: Vladimir
Rezun!

But I never appeared on the screens or on the front pages of newspapers. Never. Vladimir Rezun
disappeared forever. I decided to break into literature not on the crest of a cheap sensation, but, so to speak,
"on a common basis", and find the way to the reader not by the name on the cover, but by the content of the books.
Therefore, I started from scratch: here is a book by an author whom no one knows. It turned out to be very
not easy. After many attempts, finally found a publisher who decided to publish the book
unknown author about the Soviet Army. And one day he asked me: are you, by any chance, not Rezun? AND,
having learned that this is so, he rejoiced: yes, we are now under our real name! Yes, we will present a bestseller
the world! But I didn't want to cause trouble to anyone, so I firmly decided - only under
alias. But if so, then the advance payment will be miserable, circulation - how it will turn out, no guarantees
success.

I stood my ground: only under a pseudonym. Then the question arose: under what? Publisher says:
there should be something Russian, preferably in three syllables and somehow connected with the army, but so
the reader did not know exactly how it was connected. I heard something somewhere, but I'm not sure.

I say: Kalashnikov! Him: No, we know that. Yes, four syllables. In short it is necessary. I told him:
Suvorov. And who is this? he asks. Yes it was, I answer.

So we decided. I thought I'd joke once, and then I'd come up with something serious. Before
My opuses will never reach the Soviet Union anyway, but here, in Britain, they don't know about Suvorov
more than about the brilliant commander Viscount de Turenne, marshal of France.

And then one wise whistleblower took me away: write under your own name or under a pseudonym,
the fee is still the same! Here it is, proof: you do not write books yourself!

Dear man, I chose a pseudonym only for the first book - for the one about Kyiv
guardhouse. Valera Simonov, my good friend at the Kyiv Higher Combined Arms
command school, and later the chief of intelligence of the army, this is what he wrote:

*Personally, while reading the book "The Liberator", I was amazed at the accuracy with which the author
depicted the Kyiv garrison guardhouse. I will not hide, I myself had to go there
to serve a total of more than fifty days. ("Moskovskaya Pravda", 31
July 1994).*

But if you believe not my friend, an order of magnitude more than mine, who served time there, but the whistleblower,
it turns out that a Russian person (with Ukrainian roots), who was there and went through it,
he is not able to talk about his impressions, and only the wise Britons, who were not there,

which the generals' toilets were not cleaned, they were able to describe all this for me. Nothing but precision the narrative was not achieved by me, but by the ubiquitous British intelligence that penetrated those toilets.

And the name on the cover, citizen whistleblower, is not the last thing. Write under your name - some fees, under a pseudonym - completely different. Only those who have never had nothing to do with the publishing world. So: the name of the author (real or pseudonym) is often more important content.

In my case, the situation looked simple.

There was a great superpower in the world called the Soviet Union. Leaders of the superpower taught everyone how to live, imposing their order with tanks, but in their own country they could not provide the population with clothing and footwear.

The superpower flooded the world for free with T-54 tanks, Vladimirov machine guns and machine guns Kalashnikov, S-75 missiles and RPG-7 grenade launchers, but was not able to feed herself.

The superpower helped everyone, from Angola and Ethiopia to Mozambique and Libya. But this the superpower was unable to build housing for its officers.

The superpower was the first to pave the way into space, but could not provide its schools warm toilets, and maternity hospitals with hot water.

For the sake of the victory of communism in Cuba, the superpower almost plunged the world into a nuclear catastrophe.

The superpower kept its breadwinners on collective farms without giving them internal passports, not to run away, and waged a stubborn struggle for the freedom of the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa.

The superpower did not pay money to its peasants, and if it later began to pay, then these Money couldn't buy anything. And the same superpower exported hundreds of tons every year gold to America in exchange for grain: let the American farmer be rich and happy, let him buy own house, car and tractor.

The superpower waged a deadly struggle against capitalism, declaring to the whole world through the mouth their leader: we will bury you!

But if the superpower buries the damned capitalists, then who will feed it?

So: an officer fled from the General Staff of this superpower. And wrote a book about the Soviet Army. Imagine a publisher announcing: here is his real name, here is a photograph, here is a biography. In this case, the interest is guaranteed. The success of the book in those years, in that situation, depended only on the name on the cover.

And here is another situation. The same book about the Soviet Army comes out. But the author is known only that his name is, for example, Makedonsky Alexander Sergeevich. Both the reader and critics of such The book, of course, will be treated with distrust. And there is no guarantee of success in this case. That's why thin advance.

I wanted the book to be judged not by its name on the cover, but by its content.

And she was appreciated. And it became a bestseller.

After that, the situation reversed.

Now the reader wants new books with this strange name on the cover. Suggest publisher to write under another pseudonym or even under his real name, but he no longer agrees.

While The Liberator was being translated, while they were preparing for publication—and this is a long and dreary business—I wrote the second book. I came up with a new pseudonym, but the publisher cut it off: it's too late, brother, you are now known under the pseudonym Suvorov.

The second book was called "Soviet Army: Problems and Solutions". The publisher rejected the title. The book was published under the title "Inside the Soviet Army" ("In the Soviet Army"), This book was about the most simple things: about the advantages of a boot over a boot, about why the Soviet battalions did not lieutenant colonels always command, but there are also majors, and even captains. I explained the most elementary things.

They laughed at us then. The Russians have a caliber of 76 mm. They had both anti-aircraft and shipborne, and tank, and regimental, and divisional guns of this caliber. And they, silly, for LNG-9 for some reason a new caliber was invented - 73 mm. They have a caliber of 122 mm - this is a howitzer, and a tank gun, and self-propelled gun based on the IS-2, and a hull gun. And for some reason they create a self-propelled howitzer of the same caliber 122 mm, and for tanks a new caliber was invented - 125 mm! Where is the standardization? Where is the logic? Stupidity, and nothing more. And laughter echoed on both sides of the Atlantic.

I explained in the book on this and other examples: no, gentlemen, everything here is correct, everything is logical. It's your mom's bad kids. You have to think: in West Germany, a 120 mm mortar and a tank gun 120 mm. But the shells of a tank gun are not suitable for a mortar. So why are you like this standardization? It only creates confusion. It is necessary to order in battle under the roar of cannonade ammunition of such and such a caliber, and then yelling into the handset what exactly is in mind.

He wrote this book for military people, proving the only idea: we don't need to be counted fools, no worse than you, gentlemen. For some reason, this book began to be bought not only by the military, but also students, pensioners, schoolchildren, housewives. The book became not just a bestseller, but "a book months" in the USA. This allowed me to pay off all my debts in one fell swoop and buy a house with marble fireplace. Now it was possible to do nothing at all for the rest of your life or to do only what you like. And I like to write books. After that there was "Aquarium", "Control", there were other books.

A separate topic is the long-suffering book "Spetsnaz".

Why was it written? I answer: much in our native Fatherland is done wrong,

like people. I don't know how to delicately express it... In a word, much, if not all, is being done we are not over the head. Officially, our identity is called the beautiful term "a special way development". In accordance with the "special way" - when done not through the head - we got the largest area on the planet.

And running wild, drinking too much, degrading, indifferent to everything, including own destiny, a dying people.

Let us turn to the stunning canvases of Vereshchagin "Mortally wounded", "Attack unawares", "After luck", "Represent trophies". We see a monstrous war in Turkestan, brutal slaughter, defeated enemies and severed Russian heads. By the way, in history lessons, we are not passed, we were not asked.

Why do we need Turkestan? And why should those victories be paid for with cut off Russian heads? We did not have enough space on earth?

Let us turn to the great Russian literature. The entire 19th century was a war in the Caucasus. They wrote about her many of our classics, from Lermontov to Tolstoy. And why did they fight for decades?

They say: we are not alone. The Spaniards did the same, and the Portuguese, British and French, then the Germans pulled themselves up, Belgium and Holland did not lag behind. Right. But having conquered the immense territories, the colonialists used the natural and human resources of the new lands for themselves benefit. And we, having annexed neighboring states, following the "special path", immediately began to pay tribute to local kings.

Where is the money to get to feed this army?

As where? Tear off five skins from a Russian peasant. So it was under the tsars, so it was under the general secretaries: all kinds of Uzbek and Turkmen, Georgian and Azerbaijani chiefs lived in the royal luxury, received unprecedented subsidies, without bringing any benefit to the people who conquered them.

And the guys in the Kremlin were not enough. They could not wait to cut more land, more tribute pay all the new freeloaders. In the expansion of the possessions of the Soviet Union, not the last role played the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff (GRU GSh) and its strike units -

Special Forces.

From the moment of creation and almost until the very collapse of the Soviet Union, this term was secret. Spetsnaz was only in the hands of military intelligence. This is now a variety of "special forces" divorced in abundance. And then there was no need to clarify: if Spetsnaz means GRU Spetsnaz.

Very few people knew about the existence of the GRU itself. In Georgia, cars went with license plates signs "GRU", and this did not surprise anyone. By the way, that is why Stirlitz in "Seventeen moments of spring" escorts pastor Shlag in a car with a Soviet license plate - white on black in Russian letters: "21-47 GRU". This happened because the liberators of Europe in 1945 were carrying trophies from Germany, and then for some reason the trophies settled in the Caucasus. For filming German films

cars from the war times were rented from wealthy Caucasian owners, being too lazy in front of the camera change numbers.

But let's not digress.

The idea of creating parts of the Special Forces of the GRU was this: let's select the best human material - not just the most physically healthy, hardy and strong, but in addition - and this the main thing is smart, capable, developed, we will create powerful military formations from them and throw them at capture all new lands! And having captured the territories of our neighbors, we will impose a new dues on the Russian people and We will pay tribute to the conquered! And everyone will be fine! And let with our money all the new princelings and kings build palaces for themselves and their servants, let them keep harems, buy stars of the world football to their district teams and invite Hollywood luminaries to celebrate their little anniversaries. And the whole world will look with a shudder at the map, see the biggest territory and consider us the strongest!

I am a principled opponent of the transformation of the Russian people into a breadwinner and a donor idlers and freeloaders, I am against the payment of tribute, I am against the seizure of more and more unnecessary lands and payment for these seizures by Russian heads.

Spetsnaz are the best combat units of the Soviet Army, but these units were intended for solving problems that are directly opposed to the interests of the Russian people. That's why I reported not to anyone, but to the whole world about the existence, structure, weapons and tactics of this beloved I am a flexible, strong, cunning and ferocious beast. And conscience does not gnaw. I acted in the interests Russian people as I understand these interests. We do not need the Turkish coast, and we do not need Africa needed! And there is no need for us to feed the parasites, especially if we cannot even provide housing, and their old people - a decent pension.

I wrote a book, gave it to a British publisher, who sniffed and puffed for a long, long time, not daring to publish. In Germany, the same story: for some reason the book never came out. And then suddenly she suddenly left in London. I opened it and was shocked. The text of the book has been mercilessly cut. I - to publisher, and he explains: you got it too long, and why about this, yes about that, why political correctness in spite of climbing into some depths?

The main blow of the long censor's scissors fell on the psychology of the fighter, on the methods survival in extreme conditions, on the tactics of military operations, on the methods of obtaining (or rather, knocking out) intelligence information.

Immediately all the problems were gone and the German publisher. He immediately published the book, but in translated from English, even left the same cover: it was more convenient for us.

At this time, a powerful wave of protests was rising in Poland, Samizdat flourished. I have There was no connection with the underground Polish publishers, and they could not find me. Because I am not asking, Polish underground publishers translated this book from German...

There were many Russian publishing houses outside the borders of the Soviet Union, I went to them: gentlemen, citizens, the book is published in a tormented form, but here is my full version, take it for free, just let all text out!

There were no brave ones. Neither the full text, nor even castrated. Book in Russian never came out.

Then the Soviet Union collapsed. And at once they all grew bolder: come on!

What for? To find out the tasks of the units of the Special Forces of the Western Group of Forces in the upcoming battles with NATO troops? So there is no more Western group, and there is no German Democratic Republic, on the territory of which the armies, corps and divisions of the Western Group of Forces were located. There is no more Central, neither Southern nor Northern groups of troops. There are now sovereign states, and all of them are no longer our brothers. There is no longer any Carpathian, or Baltic, or Belorussian, neither Kyiv nor Odessa military districts. But the district is a group of armies! IN Each district had a Special Forces brigade. In addition - in every combined arms and tank army - own separate company of Special Forces. But everything collapsed.

If the book had been published in full before the collapse of the Soviet Union, now it would be possible I would say: this is the very first thing that was published on this issue, do not judge strictly, not an angel God wrote, but a man filled with ignorance.

But if it did not work out then, now there is no point in returning to the past. Moreover, in I was wrong on one point. I predicted that the Soviet Army would never leave Afghanistan. It was the greatest stupidity to send troops into Afghanistan, but to withdraw them was suicide. That's really true: the entrance is a ruble, the exit is two. After all, everyone understood: if the troops from Afghanistan withdraw, the Soviet Union will collapse instantly. That's why I thought: they won't leave there.

But they left. And exactly six months later the socialist camp collapsed. August to December 1989, the entire "camp" broke up. And a year and a half later, the Soviet Union itself.

During my service, units of the Special Forces of the GRU did not fire a single shot in the war. And then my departure, they did not leave the battle for a single day. Because I have no moral right to anything write about them now.

The versions of the book "Spetsnaz" that go on the Web are an evil and illiterate translation from Polish, which is a free translation from German, which is a translation from English, which is a poor translation from a jagged, twisted, incomplete Russian original.

In the text from the Web, take the very first phrase about some kind of "blades". translator obviously sought to humiliate and shame our nice guys, to present the matter in such a way that all this is not serious, that we are talking about something like a sandbox on a playground.

But there are no blades in parts of the Special Forces! A tool that people who did not serve in the army

ignorance is called a "sapper shovel", has a different name - a small infantry shovel.

The rest of the text in the same vein is illiterate!

I have nothing to do with these writings. Please don't judge me for them.

In 1985 I completed Icebreaker. There are many publishers here, but it was not possible to publish the book. I placed several fragments in the newspaper "Russian Thought", in the magazine "Continent" and in the magazine Royal Advisory Institute for Defense (Royal United Services Institute for Defense * and Security Studies). I searched hard for a publisher. In the meantime, work on the book continued.

Added new chapters, rewrote old ones. The book was published for the first time in German.

language in 1989, and in English in 1990. In Russian abroad "Icebreaker" so

never came out. Some were taken, and then they said that it would be necessary to change the style. And what that's not scientific.

I told them: but I don't need a scientific one. Who do we write books for? That's right - for the people. So here it is let's write in a language that is understandable and close to our people. Write in the learned language of the mind No need. Any academician is capable of writing in a learned language. But you try to write like this, so that and schoolchildren, and housewives, and soldiers, and officers, and lumberjacks, and musicians are interested was.

Quite deliberately, I did not begin to prove my theory on the academic field, not began to argue with our highbrow and wise. He wrote in such a way that my thought reached the wide the masses of the people, let them ask high-browed questions and demand an answer.

Meanwhile, the so-called "glasnost" was raging in the Soviet Union, under under the cover of which archival documents were destroyed by the ton. Neva magazine published "Aquarium" and turned to me: give me something else! I told them: you won't print it. And they: come on, we have freedom of speech. I gave them the Icebreaker, and there was silence. I call in a month: how is it? Answer, which is great, but there is no date for which the publication could be timed. Go months, the date is coming: the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War! call: ok How? You understand, they answer, we cannot offend veterans by such a date.

After that, everything froze again. The reason is the same: there is no date to coincide with. A if you just publish it, then who will read it? So no one dared, even after how the Soviet Union collapsed.

Dubov Sergey Leonidovich undertook to publish "Icebreaker". I doubted: what should be the circulation? The man was cautious, did not like to take risks, so at first he made a timid entry - a total of 320 thousand. Then I realized that it was not enough, and while a trial edition was being printed, I added the first million.

And I have a basket full of other books. Until the "Icebreaker" began to write, I thought that I would manage one big article. After many years it became clear that one book is not enough. For that,

* So in the original.

to explain some points in the "Icebreaker", I had to write "Day M" and "The Last Republic", and "The Last Republic" in turn stretched into three books.

I had to develop and parallel themes that arose along the way. To me they kept repeating: yes, these Russians could not have planned such a thing, they were completely unprepared for war. On I decided to answer this with a powerful article: look at Hitler! On his army, on readiness for war. The article, as soon as I sat down to write it, immediately grew into a book "Suicide": dope in Hitler's state and the army were no less than ours. After writing a book, I realized that the topic has only been touched upon in passing. There will be time - I will return to her.

Critics are not appeased: Stalin could not prepare an attack, he himself beheaded his army. I decided to answer this with a powerful article, which resulted in the book "Purification": admire Tukhachevsky and similar "geniuses". And this topic turned out to be bottomless. I just opened it up. Maybe I'll get back to it. There is no time for everything, another problem has eclipsed the horizon: this is what we have the commander was a genius by the name of Zhukov, so talented ... I had to do this too to respond with an article that demanded two explanatory articles that demanded ... In As a result, now I have only two books about Zhukov - "The Shadow of Victory" and "I Take Back My Words". But I will definitely get to it again one day.

For a quarter of a century, the Icebreaker has been refuted by a seemingly furious argument: one person could not write this, a group of experts from British intelligence worked here.

The reception is old. This has been accepted for hundreds of years. When the guys from the Holy Inquisition - those the most, who have cold hearts and hot heads, had nothing to cover, they announced: yes, this is not you wrote, the Devil led your hand! That's all.

And go and prove it's not true. That this move is good, which allows you to immediately get away from the discussion essence of the question: this is the creation of the Devil, what else to argue about?

So, using the argument about British intelligence is a manifestation of cowardice and an attempt evade discussion of really important issues. For nearly thirty years I have been demanding: set up a group of experts against me, we'll huddle in front of the TV cameras, and the people will judge.

But neither the Minister of Defense, nor the Chief of the General Staff, nor the President of the Academy of Sciences, nor the higher leaders have not yet responded to this call. And they will never respond. Because their point of view is not logical and deeply immoral. They advocate two mutually exclusive postulates.

First: the Red Army saved Europe from Nazism.

Second: the Soviet Union was a loyal ally of Hitler, never attack Germany

I would, I didn't intend to release anyone and didn't plan to.

Why is this being done? Why do the leaders and their ideological servants furiously prove unprovable? Yes, then, that it is necessary to plunder the remnants of the country's former power and wealth, but to steal smart people are not easy. That's why they need to be fooled. And here is the result: tens of millions together

repeat: the Soviet Union liberated Europe from the brown plague, but did not want to liberate, and was not capable of this, because he was completely unprepared for war.

Friendship and cooperation with Hitler, complicity in his crimes, supplies of strategic raw material, without which the waging of war and the conquest of Europe were impossible, is our national shame. I broke my fate, broke the fate of relatives, friends, relatives in order to prove country and world: the alliance with Hitler was a tactic, a red herring. A Stalin's strategic plan is the defeat of Germany and the liberation of Europe from the brown plague. Being a friend of Hitler is a shame and an outrageous abomination. Attacking Hitler is a sacred thing. Declaring this, I save the honor of my country, people and army. All my books are about this.

It's easy to write a book for someone. But writing a good book for someone is impossible.

Ever since I was young, when I was composing the story of the mechanical cat, I have tried to resolve riddle: what is a good book? What requirements must it meet?

I thought for a long time, wiser, pondered, and this is what I came to.

Let me share: in my opinion, a good book should satisfy only one requirement - it must be interesting.

They will object: yes, how so! After all, it still has to be wise, and sensible, and meaningful, cognitive, calling, mobilizing, inspiring, sincere. We have a bunch more different requirements will be dropped.

Let's face the objections: if the book is interesting, doesn't that say it all? Isn't this exhausted all possible characteristics at once? Does anything need to be added to this?

Well, let's think about it. If the book is interesting, can it also be stupid? If interesting, can it be stupid? Empty? Empty? Soulless?

An interesting book is always smart, sensible, informative, and sincere.

But how to make it like that? They say that you need to put a piece of your soul into your creation.

No, citizens! Don't be fooled! A piece is not enough!

Don't be mean! Don't press! Don't be greedy! Don't be stingy! Invest it all! Whole! Without

the remainder!

But what about then? If you put your whole soul into it, what will you be left with?

Calm down, skeptics, cynics and pessimists. She's also immortal. Put your soul into yours creation, you will not lose. On the contrary, your soul after that will become higher, wider, deeper and purer.

I wonder what is easier: to compose an interesting book or to make an interesting film?

There can't be two opinions here. To make an interesting film, you need to invest your soul and money. And for a book, only one soul is enough. Agree: ink bubble, goose feather tails and papyrus are not such a big expense. By and large, only one is invested

soul.

And it's all?

And it's all.

But even here everything is not so simple. Not everyone is able to bare his soul and lay out. Yes, not at she is everyone. Some, perhaps, would like to post it, but cannot because of it.

complete absence. That's why you don't come across a good book every day. That is why

It is impossible to write a good book for someone. You can't squeeze your soul into someone else's cover.

And when my opponents run out of arguments, they begin to compose dirty and nasty fake stories. It upset me. But fate sent a ringing call to the friend of life girl from the control group. Here she is sometimes asked: you have such a beautiful accent, you probably Swede? Yes, - she answers, - a Swede, from near Poltava. This wise woman with whom we recently celebrated the Ruby wedding, I was once reassured: let them talk! Let them speak louder! Let screaming, screaming and yelling! This is evidence that they have nothing to object to. This is admission.

Viktor Suvorov aka Vladimir Rezun

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